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SHORT·STORIES·FROM  
·: THE·BALKANS·:

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EDNA·WORTHLEY·UNDERWOOD









**SHORT STORIES FROM  
THE BALKANS**



# SHORT STORIES FROM THE BALKANS,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH  
BY  
EDNA WORTHLEY UNDERWOOD.



BOSTON,  
*Marshall Jones, Company*  
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**DEDICATED TO MY FATHER**  
**ALBERT WORTHLEY**



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**YAROSLAV VRCHLICKÝ**

## VRCHLICKÝ

YAROSLAV VRCHLICKÝ—whose real name is Emil Frida—is perhaps the most important personality in modern Bohemian literature. He was born in Laun in 1853, and was carefully educated in several different preparatory schools before going to the University of Prague where it was his intention to study theology. He changed his mind however and gave his time to philosophy, languages and literature. In this same university later, he held for many years the professorship of modern literature.

As a writer his productivity has been almost unparalleled, and it has expressed itself for the most part in the domain of poetry. Some thirty volumes of lyric verse have been published by him, and a number of volumes of poetic plays. It is as lyric poet that he ranks highest, being gifted with imagination and a sensitive ear.

In his position as professor of literature, he wished to introduce to his countrymen, and make easily accessible, in cheap editions, as many foreign writers as possible. He not only urged others to help do this, but he set an example himself. The leading poets of Germany, France, Italy and Spain, in their entirety, Yaroslav Vrchlický gave to his nation, in wonderfully fluent and sympathetic renderings. His translations are among the great monuments of modern scholarship.

His work in prose is less considerable, both as original writer and translator. His best prose works are "Bits of Colored Glass" and "Ironic and Sentimental Tales."

The story, "Brother Cælestin," which we give, is from one of these collections and it is his most celebrated story.

It would be difficult to underestimate the influence of Vrchlický upon the youth of Bohemia who have for so many years come under his inspired tutelage. Yaroslav Vrchlický died in 1912.

None of the prose stories of Vrchlický have been published in English except one,<sup>1</sup> and of his verse we have seen but one small fragment, the exact name of which we do not remember, but it was written to the beautiful hands of a woman.

<sup>1</sup> VRCHLICKÝ (Yaroslav). "Abisag." See Underwood, Edna Worthley. ("Famous Stories From Foreign Countries.")

## SHORT STORIES FROM THE BALKANS

### BROTHER CŒLESTIN

**H**IGH in the Apennines it stood—a gloomy cloister. It towered blackly on the edge of a steep, forbidding, treeless abyss, and the sun beat pitilessly upon its bare, gray walls. There was something strange about this Cloister; here God and Satan dwelled side by side. God hid Himself behind the great altar in the church; Satan dwelled in the cell of the Prior, above his desk, and in fact right behind a picture. God knows to what school that picture belongs! It represented the Temptation of Saint Anthony. This had been a favorite subject for representation with a school of painters. Teniers and Tassaert had represented the subject with humor, Bosch with great imagination; it had been given



by Callot to the modern world through the pen of Hoffman, that unjustly forgotten poet, and dreamer of golden vessels and magic draughts.

On one of these pictures, among the many shapeless and nameless monsters that surrounded the poor and holy hermit, moving in a hideously merry dance, there was in one corner of the canvas a great green frog with a bird-shaped beak, and a hugely swollen white goiter. Behind this frog dwelled Satan, and unobserved, through the eyes of the frog he watched—not holy Saint Anthony kneeling in prayer, but the living body of the Prior and his priestly comrades.

I am obliged to confess that for sometime Satan had been terribly bored in his quiet corner. The Prior was a pious man, and the monks hymned sleepily their breviaries. To tease them by means of sensual dreams was something altogether too commonplace, indeed Satan himself would be ashamed to do it, and at the same time he wished to amuse himself. Sometimes he closed the prayer book of the Prior ten times right before his nose, but with stoic calm, the Prior would open the book for the eleventh time and find the place of Scripture he was reading, and put in a book mark.

On this book mark two flaming hearts were embroidered, and a cross sewn out of pearls; it was evidently a keepsake "from the world." Satan tried to convince himself that it was childish to close the book the eleventh time. But the facts of the case are that he was ashamed to confess that he was not sufficiently emancipated mentally to be free of fear of the cross. He would not have confessed it himself, but I am confessing it for him strictly "*sub rosa*."

In this Cloister a young monk lived. Shelley, that poetic interpreter of the human heart, would have named him Alastor, but here they called him Brother Cœlestin. His ~~was~~ a gentle, inspired dreamer's soul, certainly worthy of a better fate than to wither away between gray, desolate walls. He was not especially beloved in the Cloister, and yet he was so quiet, so devoted. He did not coquette for a flattering look from the Prior, and when he met the brothers in the long, gloomy halls, he called out his "*Memento*" to them humbly—in the spirit of the Scriptures, not in the spirit of hypocrisy, which was something he knew nothing about.

Why Cœlestin entered the Cloister it would not

be easy to say. Perhaps it was something that had to be. There are men in whose lives the fatalism of the past asserts its rights, that fatalism which the middle-age tried vainly to displace by means of faith in Providence, and which the modern world tried to make blind by the light of science, and succeeded only in dimming. It was easy to see that Cœlestin was not contented in the Cloister. What was to him the wonderful, magic beauty of nature, if he could look upon it only through the narrow window of his cell, which was covered with iron bars! The rest of the monks were old, too. They were unfriendly and cross. Perhaps the dreams with which they had stepped over the Cloister threshold had proved false as his own.

The cell of Brother Cœlestin was small; it looked bare and needy. It had one advantage, however; it was in an old tower, the remnant of an older fortification. This tower, with its one little iron-barred window, was the nest of all his dreams. A few boards made his bed; a Bible and breviary his library. The room to him seemed strange and bare. But the view out upon the mountain summits worked magic upon him, breathed into

his soul such warmth and sweetness, as had done long ago the face of his mother.

For long, long hours Brother Cœlestin stood by the window, with greatest pleasure at the hour when the splendor of the sunset was poured over the mountains, when their harsh, dark outlines glowed in violet radiance, and the mist of evening floating down the terraced declivities, shimmered sweetly like a gentle rain of pale, blush-roses.

At night, too, for long, long hours Brother Cœlestin stood by the window when over the glooming, black heads of the mountains shot a yellow glow resembling the Aurora Borealis of the North. Then the distant stars trembled like little white flowers. What peace, what quiet, what perfume floated upon the night! Over there, in that corner between the mountains—thus thought Brother Cœlestin—there where the clouds and the mists, and the stars, and the birds are born, there sits an unknown divinity and dreams some mighty dream men call nature, world, human life.

By day, under the direct light of the sun, Cœlestin did not look across to the mountains; they were sad then, they seemed less lofty, humble, and oppressed.

I must remind the reader who has accompanied me through this dream of Brother Cœlestin that Satan was becoming fearfully bored in the cell of the Prior.

Likewise, I must communicate to him the fact that the Cloister was very poor. The monks depended wholly upon the benevolence of the country people who lived in this locality. That, however, was sufficient for their needs. Then times were different than they are now, the priest, and especially the monk, was as sacred to men as the friendly brown swallows that yearly nested under the eaves.

From time to time the Prior sent one of the monks into the mountains. He gave him two companions: Brother Andrew, who knew the mountain pathways as well as a bandit, and an old gray ass, which—laden with numberless empty baskets—brought back provisions. It was the duty of Brother Andrew to lead the ass. Perhaps that is the reason that the monks called the gray companion Andrew. And when they said: "Andrew is coming back from the mountains," no one knew whether they meant the monk or the ass, or both. Brother Andrew was an old, crabbed, grumbling

fellow who was never pleased with anything. When he was walking along the road he complained because the sun was hot. If the sun dipped down behind the mountains and set, he complained of the rough, pebbly road. When he was in the peasant homes he complained about the Cloister, and when he was in the Cloister he complained about the peasants. The shrewd Prior, who did not wish to displease the people because of this disagreeable disposition, always sent another Brother to accompany him. And because he wished to earn the gratitude of the Order, this one usually carried pictures, rosaries, and crosses for a gift to the peasant children, which he was careful, however, to distribute among the elders, *ad captandam benevolentiam* of the fathers and mothers.

So Brother Andrew returned to the Cloister with the baskets filled with butter, smoked meat, and various articles of food. And on the evening of his return the psalms of the choir resounded with a more solemn dignity, and the candles burned later in the great, barren, marble floored room which was the refectory.

Once Brother Andrew was standing with the

empty baskets in front of the door waiting for a companion.

Andrew, the monk, had gone to the Prior, for his latest directions. Brother Cœlestin was gazing sadly away toward the mountains. His heart was filled with an indescribable longing. Then he looked up and saw the basket-laden ass. A wild desire mastered him to learn to know the intricacies of the mountains, to breathe deeply the fresh, free air, to rejoice with the soaring lark, and to look again upon the faces of living men,—not these dried mummies who were perishing in asceticism. He did not pause to consider. He went directly to the Prior, entered without being announced and without greeting.

“Father—I have a request. It is the first since I have been here. Hear me—in God’s name!”

The Prior looked surprised, but he replied gently, although there was reproach in his tone.

“You sin, my son, against the rules of the Order. You can have no requests. To express a request is to express a wish, and suppression of the individual will is the first step toward priestly perfection.”

Cœlestin was silenced. He blushed and tears came to his eyes.

The Prior spoke on. "I have sympathy for your youth. Tell me what you wish. Perhaps I will grant it, but in the future spare me a repetition and do not leave your cell until He summons you Whose unworthy servants we are."

Hesitating, Cœlestin stated his wish. He asked to accompany Andrew into the mountains.

The Prior considered, then he said earnestly: "Very good! Not because you asked me, but because it is really your turn to go. Go—and God be with you."

Cœlestin kneeled at the Prior's feet, and wet his hand with tears as he kissed it. The Prior could not understand the tears. The procession started.

Never before had Brother Andrew been so cross and disagreeable. He thought he had cause enough. He had a presentiment that their journey would be fruitless, and he was planning how to throw the blame upon Cœlestin. Cœlestin, for the first time in his life, was supremely happy. Anyone who has recovered from a serious illness, or



a criminal who, after long years, has left his prison, can sympathize with the feelings of Cœlestin. It seemed to him that the world had just been created for him; everywhere he beheld his own soul; in the blossoms of the cyclamen, in the fearless wings of the eagle, which, high above, vanished in blue depths of air. If his training and his black gown had not hindered him, he would have followed the wild goats up the steep declivities where they leaped to nibble the berry bushes. His eyes sparkled. His hands trembled. Brother Andrew, I mean the monk, had predicted well. Just as if fate had closed the doors and the hands of the peasants and Brother Andrew—I mean now the ass—felt upon his back the results of the day. The old monk was right. Cœlestin had not taken along any pictures or rosaries, and he did not know how to praise the hens and the cattle of the peasant women nor to amuse their children. His heart was full to overflowing with his vision of the beautiful world, and his eyes spoke eloquently, but this speech the world does not understand. In short they were obliged to return with empty baskets. In one peasant house, all had gone to the village except the children, and these peered greedily

through the papered windows, at the ill-assorted pair and refused them curtly. Poor Cœlestin! It was all his fault. Brother Andrew was in his worst temper. His gray namesake was secretly happy, however, because he did not have anything to carry. They moved slowly along the stony, treeless way. Andrew growled and grumbled, Cœlestin sought vainly in his mind for a safe explanation.

Just at this moment the swollen frog with the canary bird's beak upon the painted canvas in the Prior's cell, began to wiggle its white head, just as live frogs do, on the edge of ponds, when the warm spring rain falls. The Prior, however, observed nothing of this because he was so deeply absorbed in his breviary.

Our pilgrims reached at length the summit of the mountains. There stray trees grew, and berry bushes. They thought they would rest here a little, the ascent and the heat had tired them. But what thing did they see! There in shadow of a tree, with face pressed to earth, lay a man whose clothes were ragged. He was sleeping or dead. By his side lay a flute.

Brother Andrew began to grumble about vaga-

bonds and thieves and wished to go on, but kind Cœlestin insisted that it was their duty to aid him. A quarrel arose out of which Andrew—the gray one—had the advantage. He lay down to rest in the coolness and began to eat grass and leaves. Brother Andrew resisted resolutely. One must be cautious, because how could they tell whom they were helping. To his great surprise Cœlestin resisted just as resolutely that the poor man must be lifted upon the ass and taken to the Cloister. It was evident that he was struggling between life and death. Cœlestin bent down and observed the face—an ordinary face without expression! “A musician! An idle, good-for-nothing wanderer in the mountains!” grumbled Andrew.

In the midst of continued resistance on one side, and a generous giving of biblical examples of brotherly love on the other side, they lifted the stranger to the back of the ass, and started for the Cloister, which peered forth from the mountain peak opposite, just as if it were eager to see what rich treasures of food Cœlestin was bringing back.

“A fine gift—this—we have,” declared Brother Andrew. Cœlestin picked up the flute. He had never seen such a thing before; he laughed be-

cause the slender black pipe pleased him. He hid it in his breast but Brother Andrew leaped upon him like a wild animal, and declared it must be given either to the Prior or the Cloister, as recompense for nursing—or perhaps the burial of the stranger. In order to end the quarrel Cœlestin gave the flute to the sick man, who opened his eyes from time to time and groaned.

On the terrace of the Cloister the monks had assembled, with the Prior in front, to await impatiently the return of the two Andrews. Food was low and more than usual now they felt need of sitting together in the lighted refectory, in front of well filled glasses and plates. But what a disappointment! Through the gate came Andrew number one, grumbling, and Andrew number two bore upon his back a drunken blackleg—was the universal opinion—while last came Cœlestin, his head bowed and hands folded, shyly, like a criminal who comes before his judge.

Astonishment, anger, complaints! No food. No smoked meat which Brother Cleofas enjoyed so, no artichokes, for which Brother Zeno was enthusiastic, and not a single melon of which Brother Sulpicius was so greedy. Instead of the promised

meal, a beggar, an outcast in ragged clothes. O Cœlestin what have you done!

With a commanding look the Prior controlled the anger of the brothers, and with a still more commanding look he spoke to Brother Cœlestin. "Whom do you bring here, my son?"

"Jesus, the Christ!" he replied, and raised his blue eyes to the Prior.

Laughter resounded on all sides.

"He has lost his mind! He is laughing at us!"

Thus ran the opinions.

"Blaspheme not, my son," answered the irritated Prior.

"I do not blaspheme, father, and I repeat: I bring Jesus the Christ. Did he not say himself: 'What ye do to the least among men, that ye do unto me'? Consider, father! The poor fellow lay on the highway, suffering pain, in the sun. Did not God himself send us in his pity to lessen his suffering? It was for that reason that all the doors were shut against us, that we might succor this dying one and bring him here. If our baskets had been full of food, we could not have helped him, so everything was arranged wisely by Providence."

A murmur circled the row of standing monks. The Prior was all but convinced. After a little meditation he said: "According to the commands of brotherly love you have done well, but likewise the Scriptures say: 'Be cunning as the serpent.' Is it not possible that this fellow is merely making believe? Who knows but he is an adventurer, who seeks our Cloister out in order later to fall upon it with his companions and plunder it!

"But it is done now and argument is useless. Let your punishment be—since you did this without consulting me—to take care of the sick man yourself. Come, Brothers, it is time for evening prayer!"

It was a sad and sorry-faced festival today! In the mind of Brother Zeno, who was singing, there were visions of artichokes cooked in fragrant oil; Brother Sulpicius was afraid to lift his eyes to the altar; lest he should behold fabulous, golden melons floating there; and good Cleofas thought that the incense was the smell of smoked meat. How sad was that evening meal. Nothing but dry bread, raw turnips, and cheese so old it was green. And Cœlestin was to be blamed.

Scarcely was the sad meal ended when a Brother

announced the death of the stranger. Fresh trouble, and another round of reproaches for Cœlestin. Even the Prior could not hold in any longer, and began to scold: "Expense! Useless expense!"

Brother Cœlestin remained with the dying man to the last breath. As soon as he closed his eyes, a strange feeling came over him; he felt as if he were going to commit theft. With trembling hand he felt the body of the dead man, and at last he found what he sought—the old flute. As if it had been a costly treasure he hid it in his breast. The entire day he walked about like one in a dream. The monks meanwhile buried the stranger by the Cloister wall. But instead of prayers they only flung a few remarks at him, along with some handfuls of dirt.

It was a fragrant evening of summer. Cœlestin stood by the window of his narrow cell and gazed across at the mountains. His soul was slowly bursting into bloom like a gigantic flower.

He had never seen a flute before. He drew it forth eagerly and looked at it just as a child looks at a new toy, and then tried awkwardly to put it to his lips and place his fingers upon the openings

and move them up and down. He made the attempt of blowing his breath into it. A pure, sweet tone bubbled up from the flute and floated forth upon the air of evening. It was as if a swan upon a lake was singing its death song.

Cœlestin was astonished and repeated the attempt, and this time longer and with more courage. If the first note was like a quiet lament, the next note was a reproach, and did not perish suddenly, but ended with a sharp call.

In his inexperience Cœlestin thought it could not be otherwise, and that it all consisted in just blowing breath into the flute, and the flute itself would do the rest, and so he blew valiantly.

It was a strange melody!

All the poetry of the pleasant evening of summer mirrored itself in the waves of this mystic music. It was as if the crimson evening spread itself around the tones! And these tones which melted into a tender elegy, trembled like the wild, clinging vines, which pushed up between the hops, along the cloister wall, and lifted their large, variegated blossoms through iron window bars, and nodded into gloomy cells.

It was as if upon the edge of each huge flower-



cup an ethereal being sat, and this being was whiter than ivory, and more translucent than mist. And each tiny ethereal being kept time with its golden head, and bowed and nodded to the other flowers. And then they began to dance, as if a thousand bright butterflies were being cradled in the blossoms. Heaven bent nearer, the mountains grew loftier and lordlier. The river, which twisted between walls of rock, murmured as if in a dream, and the forbidding cliffs which watched it mirrored themselves in the golden sand and leaned nearer. The juniper bushes gleamed with a magical, emerald green. And each note—it was as if it found a brother! One found it in the tender tint of evening clouds, another in the silvered glory of the waves, and still another in the violet shadows of distant mountains. Every tone repeated itself in an echo which floated down through the crevasses of the old Cloister wall, wandering along the stained glass windows of the chapel, dancing over the graves of the monks who now slept in peace. And still Cœlestin played.

It seemed as if, by means of the music, all things that oppressed him fell away. His mood was the same as that morning when for the first time he

went into the mountains; but he felt freer, like the eagle he had envied that day, happier than the blossoms of the cyclamen in whose slender cups he had found his soul. He played on and looked out upon the mountains behind which the sun was sinking amid enchanting colors. The landscape in front of him melted into broad strips of shimmering, floating colors, the little river arose from its rocky cavern, and threw into his window a rain of gems—onyx, pearls, and rubies. The evening red became a sea, the flowering vines of the Cloister wall grew in jars of crystal. Naked odalisques and sylphs arose from them and leaned toward him with beckoning mien. Everywhere resounded melodious, bizarre, grieving, passionate, imploring tones like the falling pearls of May rain upon the thick, blooming forest where the jasmine clings.

And Cœlestin played on and on; a flood of fancies broke over his head, like the flood of ocean over one who is drowning. There was something penetratingly sweet for him in this whirlpool of tone, like the clash of cymbals, like the pealing of bells. Gradually it grew stiller and stiller, only into his window peered the dew-wet magic night, with its sweet, star eyes.

Upon the threshold stood, as if turned to stone, Brother Cleofas. The flute fell from the hands of Cœlestin. Brother Cleofas announced the command of the Prior. Cœlestin must come at once to the refectory and bring the flute.

A formal meeting was in progress. Cœlestin, absorbed by his music, had forgotten the hour of evening prayer, and what was worse, he had disturbed the prayers of the others. The monks, who were already angry with Cœlestin, awaited joyously the punishment of the Prior. At first the Prior believed that Cœlestin knew how to play. But he insisted that he had never seen a flute before and thought all there was to it was just to blow in it. A storm of laughter was the answer to this. Some believed him a deceiver, others saw his innocence. The Prior meditated. The honest countenance of Cœlestin disarmed him. The Prior decided that the flute was the property of the convent, told Brother Cleofas to take and guard it.

Cœlestin spent a sleepless night. Continually he heard that enchanting music. The next day was dim and fog-filled. Cœlestin felt like a person after a nightly orgy. He felt as if there were a frightful emptiness in his soul, he walked about

his cell and the church like a stranger. He suffered from a longing he could not express, he feared even to try to express it, and at the same time, he knew that it was because he was grieving over the lost flute.

Again evening came, and this time more gloomy and fog-hung than the day. The mountains looked like sorrowing widows hidden in their veils. With arms crossed upon his breast Cœlestin paced his cell. There was but one thought in his brain and that tortured him. The flute!

Someone knocked softly at the door. He opened it, and in the dim passage he saw a Brother. It was too dark to distinguish face or feature, but it seemed to resemble Brother Cleofas.

"Has the Prior sent for me again?" stammered the surprised Cœlestin.

In reply the dark figure touched a warning finger to its lips—and then held out the flute. Who else could it be but Brother Cleofas, the one who dreamed of the sweetness of smoked meat?

"Cleofas, Brother!" exclaimed Cœlestin, with delight. "Then there is one who has sympathy for me, who has not forgotten me, who braves the anger of the Prior for my sake! I thank you,

Brother—and I always thought you were my enemy. Pardon me, Brother! Pardon me! My flute, my flute!”

The monk signalled him to be quiet. Before Cœlestin thanked him he had disappeared. In his excitement, good Cœlestin had quite forgotten that now all the Brothers were assembled in the church. He believed firmly that that silent monk must have been Cleofas. He went to the window and played.

The melody was sad and elegiac, as if it tried to harmonize with the mood of the evening. Suppressed sighs, restrained tears, were interwoven in the melody; a thousand nightingales sobbed their sorrow in the song. Then, upon the instant, it changed—it was a wild dance of a carnival, an unrestrained orgy, wherein from time to time shook the laughter of madness. I do not know how long Cœlestin played, but this time it was really Cleofas, who, raging like a tiger, came with a message from the Prior. Cœlestin declared that Brother Cleofas came to his cell and gave him the flute. The Prior knew that Brother Cleofas had been in the church with him. Cœlestin stuck to his statement and could not be shaken from it. It looked

bad for Cœlestin. Everyone had seen Cleofas at vesper service; no one had seen Cœlestin.

The Prior put his hand to his brow as if in search for a reasonable decision. The Prior took the flute and carried it into his own room. Cœlestin was led to the Cloister prison, where he was to remain and eat only bread and water until he confessed to the truth. Night came on. Cœlestin did not know it. The little prison chamber under the roof was always dark. The one little barred window was right under the drain spout of the roof. The door opened. Brother Cleofas came in. Grumbling he placed a piece of bread by Cœlestin's cot; and fastened a diminutive earthen lamp to the unpainted wall and left. Cœlestin tried to talk with him, but he shut the door in silence and turned the key.

He threw himself upon the miserable cot and tried to sleep. Feverish fancies crossed his brain, his forehead was hot, his eyes were heavy, but he could not sleep. Slowly the hours passed.

"What a wretched existence!" thought Cœlestin, "It would be better to die." He began to meditate about death. It seemed to him something desir-

able. The flickering flame of the lamp sent smoke and shadows across the barred window space, and stretched into thicker blackness in the corners. Right by the door Cœlestin watched the shadow grow thicker. Was it an illusion? He rubbed his eyes in order to see better. The shadows thickened into a form, and the form drew near to him. It was hidden in a brown robe of peculiar shape. The long, thin, yellow face resembled old parchment in the Cloister library. It came nearer and nearer and its steps were noiseless. Cœlestin looked straight at this phantom being; he did not feel the slightest fear. Now it stood beside him and looked down upon him with green, sparkling eyes.

"You are Satan!" declared Cœlestin calmly, without turning his eyes away.

"You may not be mistaken," replied the stranger hoarsely.

There was silence a while.

"What a miserable thing is life!" sighed Cœlestin.

"Miserable?" laughed the strange guest. "That is because you do not know it, my boy! The old complaint of children and good-for-nothings.

Life is an idea, a conception of the brain. It is your own fault if you do not enjoy it."

"What? I do not know anything about life?" questioned Cœlestin, hastily. "Then what does my renunciation mean, my struggles, my dreams—"

"Renunciation, struggles, dreams, are not life!" said Satan, scornfully. "You have a presentiment of what it is—you child with the longing of a giant and the grief of an old man in your heart."

"And *why* do I not know life?" questioned the monk, timidly.

"Because you do not know woman!" replied Satan, laughing.

"Woman?" repeated Cœlestin. "Did I not have a mother?"

"Do not speak of a mother!" interrupted Satan. "Mother is soul—God—*but not woman*. Woman is flesh—body—and that you do not know. You are very innocent, dear child." A note of sympathy trembled upon the last words of Satan.

"But how could a woman help to make me happy? I would be happy if I could travel over the beautiful world, climb the mountains nimbly as the goats, fly across the blue with the eagle, or dwell in the blossom-cup of a flower—"



"And remain a fool, just as you are!" interrupted Satan. No! You do not know what a woman is! Your unripe dreams are hung upon the stars, the eagle's wings, but not where they belong. You do not know that your soul is a woman, that nature is a woman—death—eternity— You have renounced woman and that is the reason that you are a child, with the longing of a giant in your heart, and the grief of an old man. I pity you!"

Fear stood in the young priest's eyes.

"Then teach me to know woman, and in return take my life, my soul!"

Satan laughed and came nearer.

"What is the use of this feeble light?"

With these words he extinguished it; stepped to the window and stretched his hand out into the night. Like white silk threads something gleamed outside, changed into a beam of light, and in a thrice floated between the bars a white star, which illumined the room. A sulphur glow filled the room, which gradually changed into different colors. Satan felt within his breast, drew out three round, black pieces of wood which he fitted together.

"*My flute!*" exclaimed Cœlestin, jumping up from the cot.

"Yes—*your soul!*" mimicked Satan, "Remain lying where you are."

Cœlestin obeyed, and drew the covers up. Satan put the flute to his lips. Hardly was the first note sounded than a change took place in him. He was sitting upon his bed like a naked colossus, from whose gigantic shoulders two bat's wings depended, like black banners. He played and kept time with his black head. The notes were bizarre, false, unlovely. Melody was lacking, and it seemed to Cœlestin that a rain of fire fell upon his temples. The notes grew sharp; they pierced like needles. Cœlestin was frightened, he drew the covers over his head. Something like a streak of mist floated over him and settled down with a certain restraint upon him. Picture-visions, strange and mighty, passed before him. He saw cities, uniquely towered, and houses, thick forests, and sandy wastes; ancient gardens, filled with sculptured stone. Evening came, and morning, and night again. Then he found himself in a wild garden where grew black cypress trees. Far in the rear were towers of a building of the middle-age.

Yellow sand was spread upon the broad walks, and the flowers, whose cups were shaped like stars, spread abroad a perfume that was benumbing. In front of one of the fountains, under a cypress tree, stood a woman, a splendid commanding figure. She wore black velvet, and the neck was left open in front. He stretched his arms out toward her, but she melted into mist and disappeared. Again mist spread about him, it increased, and then melted into swifter and swifter whirling circles. Down into this sped the beam of light that had floated between the window bars, and at once threw out long jasmine-blue and emerald rays, and these rays turned, twisted, and then transformed themselves into the body of a woman, around whom white mist floated like silken muslins. That was she—the dream of his sleeping soul, the one whom he saw under the cypress tree. Very plainly he saw her, he felt her breath, but Satan he did not see at all, who kept marking the time with madder measure. While he looked at her, tears flowed over his face, his head was dizzy as if with intoxication. He spread his arms out toward her, but she hurried away to the window, and, dancing upon the moonlight, she beckoned him to follow. He got

up from his cot like one drunk, the iron window bars fell clattering in the dust. He must get away, away— Upon the black chimney, blowing the flute, he saw Satan, and before him floated the resplendent summer night world of his dream—and that enticing woman. He must follow her. It was a strange road, over the roof tops. Satan was ahead, blowing the flute, then she, veiled in rosy mist, from which fell continually like rain, roses, ivy, blue bells, rhododendron, and these flowers were twined about her hair, and her snow-white limbs. Behind her came Cœlestin, with wildly outstretched arms. In front of all of them danced the moon, and threw its light in little fine threads over their feet. The stars cradled themselves in a phosphorescent splendor, and the top of the old Cloister swayed under their feet like the back of some fabulous, pre-historic monster. Where the roof made a turn, a great, black cat jumped out, with two red rubies for eyes, and long fur, from which fell sparks. The Cloister remained behind; they hurried away upon the moon-beam, and left it. Trees stood along the road like giant, veiled spectres. From their tops sometimes ravens rose. Beneath, blue flames trembled, over which

seductive will-o'-the-wisps floated. By the shore sat huge frogs, whose emerald-green bodies showed yellow spots. The air became heavy. Mist veiled the moon; and now they floated away over the crest of the mountains and the flute song was heard no more. They stood upon the edge of an abyss, into this measureless depth the woman leaped, riding upon pallid moonlight—and disappeared. Upon the edge of the cliff above sat Satan; he put the flute aside and laughed loudly and scornfully. Cœlestin opened his eyes. Darkness surrounded him.

“Give me the flute!” he thundered to Satan. “Give me the flute and I will play that beautiful woman up out of the abyss!”

Shrill laughter was the answer.

“Give me the flute—and take my soul!”

Again the laughter echoed. In wild anger Cœlestin fell upon Satan and tried to take the flute away, but Satan embraced him, and spread his black wings over him. Together they sank slowly to the earth. Cœlestin did not wake again.

In the morning the monks found the window broken, but of Cœlestin they found no trace. The Prior could not find the flute which the day before

he had placed under the picture of Saint Anthony. While he was searching for the flute, he observed the picture critically, and for the first time he saw in the eyes of the green frog the red scorn of laughter, and he saw the white goiter swell. That day he removed the picture from his cell. For a time the monks talked of the affair, and then they forgot it, as everything else is forgotten. Again Brother Andrew and his gray companion went out into the mountains for food. They were received in the most friendly manner by the good mountain people, and Brother Andrew drank more wine than was good for him. How could he help it when the heat was so great! It was late when, heavily laden, he started home, where the monks awaited him impatiently. But this time both Bacchus and Morpheus took good Andrew in charge. The ass lost the way, and in the darkness let himself be led by his namesake.

But the next morning! The sharp air awoke him and dispelled the intoxication. Rubbing his eyes, he looked about. Eternal God, with whom had he slept! Near him lay a man, his face buried in the earth, and wearing the rotting habit of his Order. It was really now only the skeleton of a

man, it had been so long the prey of wind and rain. At a little distance lay a flute! Andrew shrieked with terror. He began hastily to beat his companion, and drive him up the steep mountain-side.

Not once did he dare look back, and he made constantly the sign of the cross.

He told the Prior that he had stayed all night at a peasant's house. Whether he ever told what really happened that night I do not know.

**A VON VESTENDORF**





## FUROR ILLYRICUS

### A STORY OF THE MONTENEGRIN BOUNDARY

**W**HEN he finished I reached him my hand, wished him joy, and promised that I would come to the wedding, and the rest of the army men, too, who were off duty.

It was in truth a good marriage for both. He was young and honest, even if he was a trifle hot-headed. She, the elder of two very pretty sisters, had been somewhat nervous during the period of betrothal in the house of her father, rich Perovic of Salona, so great was the change from the quiet convent in Triest where she had been educated.

I, myself, had played the part of wooer for my sergeant with the old man, after it had been found out that the tears of the women and the honest words of the young sergeant himself were helpless. What they could not effect, the gold braid and medals of the commanding officer effected

easily. And so he gave in, and since the beginning had succeeded so well,—the dowry was arranged and the wedding day set in the midst of many cups of coffee and little glasses of *céta* and cigarettes.

One thing only stood in the way: the old man as a Montenegrin took the part of the Serbs, while Fabriccio was to all appearances useless as a soldier. In his heart he was on the side of the earlier lords of the land, from whom he had descended.

Then the wedding day drew near. The intervening time had not passed wholly free from disagreements—but at length it passed. The old man in fact seemed to take a liking to his future son-in-law, in somewhat the same manner in which he had been fond of his own son, who, against his will, had married a poor Italian girl. He disinherited the son. The pleading and tears of the women, the intercession of the priest, and the Archimandrite of S. Saba—could not move him. He would not permit the name of his son to be mentioned in the house because he was master there.

In the place of this disobedient fool, he was determined to turn over the wharf and the rope making plant to Fabriccio, until his term of army

service had expired. He was a very different man from that poor, miserable musician, Pero.

The wedding day had come.

Through the multitude of carriages of an unbelievable range of styles, we made our way along the sand of the highway, then through tremulous chestnuts to the cathedral. There in the dusky, gold-shimmering interior the ceremony was performed according to the rites of the Eastern church.

Upon huge silver platters of an antique and barbarous make, bread was offered by young priests, who wore long hair. Noiselessly these two young priests walked in and out of the doors of the painted wall which hides the altar from the curious. Sometimes they carried heavy altar books and sometimes silver vessels.

Lower sinks the white-veiled head of the bride, who, with the handsome, earnest soldier, was kneeling by the front bench. Louder rose the shattering thunder of the chorus, with its strange rhythm, its monotonous repetitions in a long forgotten language. Like trumpets that mysterious singing rings out, then there comes the deep bell tone, and from the door to the right—seen through a cloud

of incense—approaches the Archimandrite in an ornate robe of gold, with cap and staff, accompanied by priests, accompanied by little boys who are swinging censers.

My little companion who beside me to the right is standing behind the bridegroom, signals to me and lifts the little crown and holds it out over the head of the one kneeling in front. I follow her example and do the same for the bride. Then came the questions and answers. The white-bearded bishop embraces the young man and kisses him first on the right and then upon the left shoulder; he embraces the bride, who kisses his sleeve.

Then comes my turn and that of my little companion, whose shy glances tell me to do what the others have done. For a brief time I hear about me only the rustling of stiff garments, the soft scuffling of feet, as one face after the other bends to touch my shoulder and that of the maiden—old women, young women, men, boys, people whom I never saw and shall never see again.

And then came the procession back, a long string of carriages moving through a heat that resembled hades, moving slowly through the dust, between

beechen hedges and tall cypress trees. The little one beside me spread out her white veil as well as she could to shield me from the sun, and her little crown of flowers, pale roses and myrtles,—is resting against my shoulder, and the dust circling round us shuts us in like a wall.

Cannons roar. We are in front of the villa of Perovic. It is really only a massive, four cornered tower dating from imperial days with frequent additions, which had been added to it in the course of centuries, having been built out of the heaps of surrounding ruins. It consisted of huge, unadorned, white-washed rooms, and provided most sparingly with furniture. Only in the great entrance way—the *tinello*—was there furniture.

Some art loving ancestor had adorned the walls with pictures. In the midst of bright red fields a little nymph—a little picture of a nymph making music, painted just as craftsmen painted on the walls of Pompeii, and framed in the most baroque old Italian manner. There are decorations above the doors, here and there a frieze—wreaths of flowers, fruit. In a huge room opening out of this the table is set, about it are coarse chairs with straw-woven seats, which before had been placed

around the walls of the *tinello*. Beside the huge old candelabra, there are large fine mirrors, in heavily ornate frames, and some old ship's chests, otherwise the room is empty.

A heavy odor of food pervades the house. Upon the damask cloths which cover the table and fall to the floor on all sides is placed—upon common little plates—the *hors d'œuvre*, which consists of black and green olives, sardines in oil, slices—paper thin—of splendid *salami* from Verona and Mailand, celebrated ham from Punta Rosa, dried figs and diminutive glasses of old *Treberschnaps*, which is not inferior to the finest Cognac.

In front of each guest a plate, and at first of fine porcelain of all brands, and then afterwards English stoneware; with them knives, forks, and spoons of finest silver, and later knives and forks with wooden handles and made of pewter, which had been borrowed from a road-house near by.

In front of the bridal couple are two vases of fragrant flowers.

A nephew of the head of the house acts as master of ceremony and points the guests their places. At the right of the bride the bishop, next the bride's mother. On the left of my sergeant, I, beside me

Gianettina, my charming little companion for the day. Opposite the bride sits the father, by him his friends and companions. They are insolent, much-bedecorated old men, with long, hanging beards; knives and silver pistols are stuck into their girdles. They wear little black caps on their heads, and they sit and stare greedily down at the little plates.

They are put out and constrained by the presence of the women, and perhaps likewise by me. They speak Serbian and my little neighbor blushes when she translates their speeches for me softly. She knows I know no Serbian, and she never forgets to add to the answer in Italian, that she hopes the *gospodin* will learn Serbian. She tells me the names of the men, who are for the most part relatives of her father. When she comes to a young man in a white coat, who has hard, crabbed features, her face grows sad: "Once he asked to marry my sister, and she refused him. Papa, however, liked him! Ah!—what blows fell on Nine then;—but she didn't give in." Would he like to marry you now I suggest? "No, no. She wouldn't have him either. Besides she was altogether too young," she hastened to explain.



The banquet begins.

Two serving maids and the nephew of the head of the house enter with huge, four cornered bottles; one little drink and a dried fig open the meal. That is the custom evidently to banish the taste of cigarettes which are always in evidence. Then wine is poured into glasses—the heavy, thick, ink-black wine of Lissa—and each one selects his favorite morsel from the plates. Before the sugared eggs are passed around the wine takes effect—only a few clean out their plates with rye bread—and next comes the *minestra*, then baked macaroni with *hashée* made from the entrails of young lambs; fowl roasted in sugar, small *barboni* baked in oil, baked ink-fish with citron, pullets cooked with fresh vegetables and beef and served upon huge platters. First one and then another of the guests hands over to the attendants first the silver pistols and then the knives; then they unfasten the heavy leathern girdles and loosen their neckbands. Louder and more boisterous rises the laughter, redder the faces, even the face of my little companion grows rosy when I insist that she translate for me some of the witticisms.

Now, *fritolli* are brought in, round sweet cakes

fried in oil, turkeys, from which each one cuts a slice, or rather tears it off, as it happens. Fresh wine is continually brought, while the master of the house announces the year and place of vintage; wines from the islands, from Greece. Occasionally a guest rises and drinks the health of the bride's father, the bridegroom or some guest. Outside in the court-yard are heard the noisy voices of workmen and servants who are eating at a long table. The Perovic family have never been niggards.

The heat is insufferable despite open doors and windows; and I long for the fresh air and coffee. How long can this debauchery continue? At length the champagne comes and after that the special dish of honor.

Upon a long wooden tray, borne by two servants, a roast lamb is brought, and placed upon a serving table which is shoved up to the lower end of the large table. With a lordly gesture the master of ceremonies steps forward, takes up a large knife, ground thin as a hair. The master of the house speaks a few words. Then all the young people sitting round the table bow their heads quickly and cover their eyes with the edge of the table cloth.

All laugh and talk and holler. My little companion whispers to me to do just what the others do. I see the master of ceremonies lift a huge knife, and then with one blow which makes the glasses dance, sever the entire roasted lamb. One more blow and the "*jaraz*" lies cut in four parts.

The guests drop the edge of the table cloth, wipe their eyes and hair—the ones who did not skillfully hide and shelter themselves with the cloth. The master of the house congratulates the master of ceremonies upon his skill and dexterity.

This officially ends the meal. To be sure cakes and fruit are brought in, but only the ladies taste of them. The men continue to drink. The Archimandrite rises, thanks the master of the house for the banquet. The kissing of shoulders begins again, and I attempt to take advantage of the opportunity by making my own adieux, when the hands of my little companion grab me by the arm and she whispers: "Please don't go now. I'm afraid! I'm afraid!" I see that she is watching anxiously a little group at one end of the table.

Beside the master of the house stands that young gloomy looking man—the wooer whom Nine had

rejected. He is smiling scornfully and whispering in the ear of the old man. The old man laughs in an ugly manner, swallows glass after glass of wine. Then he pounds on the table and roars: "*Who mentions his name, he is dead!*" The others nod approval, slap him on the back, and touch drinking glasses with him. In the meantime the gloomy looking man goes up to talk with the bride and groom. His face is sad and tragic. He is telling them something that affects them deeply. The young bride nods approval, my sergeant pulls down his coat, straightens up and clears his throat, and walks up to the old man.

I saw Fabriccio standing beside the old man. I saw him place his hand upon the old man's shoulder, and then I heard his words as if echoing through a strange silence:

"Father—on this happy day, let us not forget poor Nicolo, who with wife and child and poverty—"

There was no way to help now. With distended eyes, white with rage, the old man jumped up. I saw Fabriccio stagger back, then start to run after the old man through the open door. There was noise and confusion on the stairs—then I saw the

little bride throw herself upon the dead body of  
Fabriccio.

Three days later they found the old man in hiding  
in a house of ill-fame. Poor little Nine!

**L. G. CARAGIALE**



## EASTER CANDLES

**L**EIBA ZIBAL, proprietor of the little rest-house by Podeni, is sitting thoughtfully under the projecting roof in front of the wine shop waiting for the stage which is already overdue an hour.

The life story of Zibal is long and it is not particularly merry. But now, in his present condition when he is suffering so from fever, it is a genuine amusement for him to parade before his mind its various incidents.

Huckster, petty merchant, general go-between — sometimes even more humble — dealer in rags and old clothes, once tailor and cleaner in a sad, dirty little street in Jassy. He had had to try his hand at all these things in the interval after losing his place as waiter in a large wine house. Under his supervision two porters had carried a cask of wine into the cellar. In the division of the labor they fell out. One seized a stick of wood and



dealt his partner a blow on the head so severe that he dropped unconscious and blood spattered the walk.

Zibal shrieked with horror at the sight, but the porter was hastening to get away, and lifting a threatening hand to Zibal, who fainted from terror. As a result he was ill for several months, and when he came back he found his old place had been filled.

Then began a fight for existence, which was made harder by his marriage to Sura. But patience and endurance can overcome the most treacherous fortune.

Sura's brother — proprietor of the rest-house by Podeni — died, and the little business was inherited by Zibal who carried it on on his own account. Here he had lived for five years. He had managed to scrape together a small competence in raw and well aged wine, which at any time has an equivalent in gold. Zibal had freed himself from poverty, but now they are all ill, he and his wife and the child — ill with the marsh fever.

The people in Podeni are bad tempered and quarrelsome. Harsh words, scorn, curses, constant complaints that they are being poisoned with

vitriol. But worst of all are the threats. A threat for a sensitive, nervous nature, is worse than a blow. And now what makes Leiba Zibal suffer more than the fever, is a threat.

"Ah!—dog of a Christian!" he thinks sadly. The one he refers to is friend George. He wonders where he is hiding—this man with whom he had had an unpleasant experience.

It was on a morning in fall. George stumbled into the rest-house weary, saying he was just out of the hospital and must have work. Zibal hired him. But George proved to be coarse and rough and bad tempered. He cursed and grumbled. He was a lazy and unwilling servant, and he stole.

One day he threatened Zibal's wife, who was soon to be confined, that he would give her a blow in the abdomen, and another time he set the dogs upon the baby. Leiba paid him and dismissed him. But George said at first that he would not go away, that he had been hired for a year. The proprietor retorted that he would go to the authorities and complain of him, and ask for the law to free him from him.

Then George grabbed for something hidden within his clothes and shrieked:—"Judas!" He

started toward Leiba as if he were going to fall upon him.

Fortunately, just at this moment, guests came to the hostelry, because the stage had just driven up. George began to grin. "What? You weren't afraid, were you, Mr. Leiba? See—I'm going!"

Then he bent over the table toward Leiba making him shrink back as far as possible, and whispered: "*You just wait till Easter night! We'll pick red eggs together! Then you'll find I've reckoned up your account!*"

The guests entered the rest-house.

"Goodbye till Easter, Mr. Leiba!" added George as he went out the door.

Leiba went to the authorities, put the case before them and asked for protection. The sub-prefect—a merry young fellow—was the first one to learn the modest request preferred by Leiba, and he began at once to laugh and to make fun of the trembling Jew. Leiba tried to make him comprehend the danger of the situation. He explained that the rest-house was in a lonely place, far from a village—yes, even off the highway. But the sub-prefect merely told him in a jocular manner to brace up and try to be sensible. Moreover he

didn't wish to talk about such things in a village where the people were so quarrelsome and poor, because it might put notions of insubordination into their heads.

Some days later George was sought by mounted police at command of the sub-prefect. A crime had been committed and suspicion pointed to him.

"How much better it would have been, Leiba thought, "if he had put up with him until the people came! Because now no one knew where he was."

Although this had happened a long time ago, it all lived again tonight in his memory, accelerated with fever and suffering. He saw him grab at his clothes as if for a concealed weapon, he heard again the threat, and he suffered again just as he did then at the import of the words. Why did the memory happen to come back so vividly just now, he kept asking himself.

It was the night before Easter.

In the little village, some two kilometers away upon the hills, between the big ponds—he could hear the church bells ringing. And they sound so strangely when they echo through a brain made sensitive with fever. Sometimes the bells are very

loud and sometimes they scarcely whisper. Easter eve was at hand. This was the time set by George for fulfillment of his threat.

"Now, of course, he is safely in prison somewhere," said Leiba, reassuringly. .

However, it may be, Zibal will have to remain in Podeni until the next quarter is over. Then with his money he will move to Jassy and open a nice little business, on the Market square—then Leiba will have good health again and not shake with fever. He will be right beside police headquarters. He will give tips liberally to all the policemen—to the inspector of police— Who pays well, is safe.

On a great market square like the one in Jassy, night is noisy, and just as light as day. No darkness there—no silence either. Never such deep silence as in this lonely valley of Podeni, between the black hills and the great speechless water. In Jassy there is a rest-house—right in an angular building on the corner—which is the finest place in the world for a rest-house. There, all night long girls dance and sing in a *Café chantant*. What noise they make! What merry life! There any hour of the day or night you can look out your

windows and see the gentlemen who enforce the law amusing themselves with other gentlemen of the law—in coquetting with the girls.

Why should he make himself miserable by staying here any longer, when the business grows worse daily, especially now since the railroad was built, which has to make a detour of miles because of the swamps?

“Leiba,” calls Sura. “The stage is coming. I can hear the bells.”

The valley of Podeni is just like the bottom of a kettle—all surrounded by hills. Down in the southern part, the springs that come from the mountains, spread out into lakes, where grouped water grasses grow like bushes. Between the swamps and the high hills in the middle of the valley stands Leiba’s lonely rest-house as brave as a fortification. Despite the wet land the walls are dry as powder.

At sound of Sura’s voice he gets up painfully and stretches his legs cramped with fever. He looks long toward the East. There is no sign of the stage.

“It isn’t coming. You just thought so,” he replied to the woman and sank down again.

Exhausted, he crosses his arms upon the table, and his head drops down upon them. Relaxation steals over his weary nerves, and his mind wanders in the strange visions of illness.

George—Easter eve—criminals—Jassy—a little safe rest-house in the Market square—a thriving business—health. He falls asleep.

Sura and the child are no longer in the house. Leiba walks to the door of his hotel and surveys the street along which they must come. Life is busy in that great street, along which the carriage wheels spin, accompanied by the rhythmic tread of horses' feet upon shining asphalt.

Suddenly the traffic is held up and from Copou—a suburb of Jassy—a crowd of foot people approach, all gesticulating and hollering. They seem to accompany some one: soldiers, watchmen, spectators. In all the windows and doors are crowds of greedy observers.

"Ah, ha," thinks Leiba. "Now they have caught a robber!"

The crowd comes nearer. Sura slips out of the crowd and comes up to where Leiba is standing on the rest-house steps.

"What's up, Sura?"

"A madman from Golia <sup>1</sup>—*escaped*."

"Let's close up so he can't attack us."

"Oh, they've bound him. But before they did it, he beat the soldiers. The bad tempered Christians shoved a Jew out of the crowd, and the madman bit him on the cheek."

From the front steps Leiba has a fine vantage point from which to see. On the step below Sura stands holding the baby.

There he goes—the madman whom two soldiers are trying to hold. His arms are bound by strong ropes. The man has the body of a giant. His head is just like a bull's; black, thick-curved. Hair covers his face—dark, in disorder. What a mass of hair covers his head! He is bare-footed; he keeps spitting blood and the hair he bit from the cheek of the Jew. Now the crowd pauses. What is the trouble?

The soldiers free the madman. The people step aside and make an open space about him. The madman pauses and sweeps the circle with his eyes, which at length pause by Zibal's door. He gnashes his teeth, then darts for the steps. In the space of a second he seizes the head of the baby with his

<sup>1</sup> Golia—insane asylum in Jassy.



right hand and the head of Sura with his left, dashes them together and they split open like egg shells.

When the two heads smash together there is a noise like the thunder.

With agony of soul, like a man plunged from a high cliff, Leiba calls: "A world stands by and looks on calmly while we are made the sacrifice of a madman!"

But somehow he cannot say the words; they stick to his lips.

"Up—Jew!" a voice calls, and a great whip strikes upon the table.

"That's a stupid joke!" remarks Sura from the door-step of the rest-house. "The idea of startling a man out of sleep like that: miserable peasant-dog!"

Leiba jumped up.

"You're afraid, are you, Jew?" a scornful jester asks.

"Sleeping in broad daylight?—Get up—guests are coming. The stage is here."

And after the old custom—which sets the Jews in agony—he put his arms around him and began to tickle him.

"Let me alone," he cried, trying to wiggle away. "Don't you see I'm sick? Let me alone!"

At length the stage comes, after almost three hours delay. There are two travelers who sit down together at one table. From the conversation of the travelers he learns the following facts. At the last post station, there was a murder committed the night before in a rest-house run by a Jew. The post horses were always changed here. But the robbers stole the horses and escaped to another village, and until other horses could be procured, the travelers were forced to observe the scene of the crime.

If the house had not been robbed one would have thought it an act of revenge or religious fanaticism. In stories told about certain religious sects, there were just such crimes. Even in the fever that was consuming him, Leiba began to shiver.

Then followed something that evidently filled the conductor of the stage with deep respect.

The passengers were two students—one of philosophy and one of medicine. Between the students now arose a debate. Atavism—alcoholism and its pathological results. Theories of

heredity—mistakes of training and education—neurosis! All the discoveries of modern science. But first—reversion to type—Darwin—Haeckel—Lombroso— Between Darwin and Lombroso the enthusiastic guests had found time to sip a little of Schopenhauer, too,—“*toward Heaven and toward the light!*”

Zibal was a long way from comprehending these enlightened theories. Perhaps for the first time exalted words like these vibrated upon the feverish swamp-air of Podeni.

But one thing Leiba had understood better than all the rest, and that was “reversion to type”—that was an exact description of George. This picture, which he had only visioned dimly, now blazed out in his mind with the vividness of reality. He saw it in its most unessential details.

The stage was far away now. Leiba watched it out of sight until it turned around a corner of the mountains. The sun had just dipped behind one of the black peaks and evening began to veil with its shadows the lonely valley of Podeni. Restless and unhappy he drops down upon the chair again and turns over in his mind all that he has heard.

In the lonely night, in the darkness, a man, two women and two children were snatched from sleep and murdered. The shrieks of the children which brutal blows silence, when they slit their bellies open—and then the last one to die, who had to sit in a corner and watch all that happened—*until his own turn came*. It was worse than an execution, and there is no hope for a Jew when he falls into the hands of the Christians.

The feverish lips of Leiba follow all these thoughts mechanically. Shivers run down his back; with trembling step he walks along the passageway in the rest-house.

“Without doubt,” thinks Sura—“Leiba is bad. He’s ill. He has *queer* thoughts in his head.”

How else could she explain the peculiarities of the past few days?

He closed the rest-house and lighted the candles just as Shabbes was drawing to a close. Three times guests knocked on the doors and friendly voices asked admittance. At every knock he jumped up and kept his wife from opening the door, while he whispered, his eyes rolling with terror: “Don’t move—I won’t let a Christian in tonight.”

Then he went into the passageway and began to sharpen the ax on the threshold. He trembled so he could with difficulty keep to his feet. He answered his wife harshly and at length sent her to bed, with command to put out the light. At first she refused but he repeated the command so strangely that she did not dare disobey, but she made up her mind that later she would find out the cause.

Sura had put out the lamp and now she was sleeping beside Strul.

Sura was right; Leiba is seriously ill.

It is night now—black night. Leiba sits beside the step that leads to the passageway and listens—What is he listening to?

Far, far in the distance there is an indistinguishable sound like horses' feet—a dull mysterious murmur as of conversation. When night makes the eye useless then the ear takes upon itself increased distinguishing power.

There's no mistake about it now. Upon the road that leads from the highway here is heard the beat of horses' hoofs. Zibal gets up and tip-toes to the great door of the passageway. It is well protected by a bar shoved into the masonry on

both sides. At the first step sand creaks under his shoes. He takes off his shoes and walks in his stockings. He reaches the door just at the moment the horsemen go by. They are talking. He catches the following words:

“He got up early.”

“But what if he had gone away?”

“Then his turn will come another time. I could have wished—”

He hears no more. The men are too far away now. Of whom were they talking? Who had gone to bed or ridden away? Whose turn will come another time? Who was it who wished it had been different? And what were they after on this lonely side-road, which was used only by people who come to the rest-house?

An oppressive weight burdened his head.

Could it be George?

Leiba felt his strength giving way and dropped down on the threshold. In the confusion of his head he could not hit upon a clear thought. Without knowing what he did he turned back and lighted a little lamp.

It was only a ghost of light, the wick was so nearly burned. It gave off very dim, vertical rays

that were scarcely visible. But it was sufficient for him to observe the well known corners and see what was there. Ah! there was much less difference between the sun and this pitiful little lamp, than between this and pitch darkness.

The clock ticked loudly. The sound hurt Zibal. He seized the pendulum and stopped it.

His mouth was dry. He suffered from thirst. He washed a glass in the wooden trough by the serving counter and tried to pour out some brandy. But the bottle clinked against the glass. These sounds hurt his head so he had to give it up.

He let the glass sink softly in the trough of water and tried to drink from the bottle. Then he put the bottle in its place with a noise that jarred him. He became breathless with terror. He picked up the lamp and placed it upon the projection of a window edge in the passageway; upon the door, the ceiling, and the opposite wall, it threw feeble, vertical lines scarcely bright enough to be seen.

Again Zibal sat down upon the threshold and listened.

Easter bells were pealing from the church upon the heights. It was the signal of the resurrection of

the Christ. Midnight then was long past. Day was not so far away. Oh, if the remainder of this night of horror would only slip away.

A crunching of sand under feet! He is in his stockings and has not moved. The sound is repeated,—again—again. Someone is outside—*near*. He stands up, grabs his chest convulsively. He tries to swallow the bunch in his throat. Men are outside.—*George!*

Yes, it is he. The bells have rung out the hour of the resurrection!

They are talking softly—the men.

*“But I tell you that he is asleep! I saw him put the light out!”*

“All the better—we’ll clean the place out then.”

“I can open the door. I know just how it works. We’ll break one of the little windows in. The bolt is near it—”

Then one heard fingers groping in the darkness—and making measurements. An auger is thrust into the dry oak of the old door and begins to turn. Zibal has to lean against the wall for support; with the left hand he supports himself upon the door, while the right covers his eyes.



Then because of the peculiar working of the brain the ear of Zibal heard distinctly these words: "Leiba, the stage is coming!"

It was Sura's voice. A beam of hope touched him—a moment of happiness. Leiba draws his left hand back. The point of the auger has come through, it has pierced his hand.

Could he save himself—? Ridiculous thought! In his burning brain that whirling auger he was watching took on startling dimensions. It whirled around and around, and the opening was growing larger and larger. What passed through that brain then transcends the power of human expression. Life had leaped to heights of exaltation from whose vantage point of vision, chaotic complications were displayed.

Outside the work went on methodically. Leiba had watched the auger penetrate in four different places.

"Now hand me the saw," commanded George.

A slender saw was slipped through the opening and began swiftly to unite the four symmetrical holes made by the auger. Now their plan was clear. Four holes; four corners—to be united by

four lines. When this was done the square of wood would fall out, and an opening be made. Through this opening a hand would enter, reach for the bolt and unbar the door—and *the Christians would enter Leiba's house.*

Then Zibal and all his family would be martyrs. Two of the vagabonds would hold upon the floor their bodies, while George would put his foot upon their bellies, and then turn that auger around and around in their breasts.

The sweat of death bathed the body of Zibal; his limbs gave way and he drops upon the floor.

With wide foolish eyes he stares at that timid light by the window. Then he laughed and said with a look that resembled that of a beast: "Soon the saw will hit the other hole!"

Then something astonishing happened. A change took place. The shaking of his body stopped. The weakness vanished. Something that resembled merriment slipped across his face.

He got up with the swiftness and security of health. He moved like a man going toward an assured act.

The line between the two highest points of the

auger holes was all but sawn. Leiba approached cautiously. Now his laughter was undissembled. He nodded his head.

"I have time!"

The saw snapped off the last wood of the upper line. Now it began its work on the next line.

"There are still three," thought Leiba, and groped his way carefully to the tavern room. He groped in a drawer, found what he wanted, and hiding it with care, tiptoed back to watch the boring auger. But the work outside had ceased.

"What is the cause? Have they gone?" the questions flashed like lightning through his brain.

"*Ha—ha—ha!*" What a mistake! The work begins anew and he watches it now with pleasure and interest. He was filled with impatience. He wished them to finish it as speedily as possible.

"Quicker!" prayed Leiba. "Quicker!"

Again the Easter bells rang out, high above, in that church on the hill.

"Quicker," ordered a voice outside. "Day will overtake us."

At last!

The borer carefully removed the square piece of wood. A huge, sinewy hand is thrust through.

Before the hand can shove the bolt, a noose of rope encircles the wrist, is drawn tight, and then fastened to a block of wood near the door.

In a trice the operation was over. Two shrieks accompany it, one of pain and one of triumph. The hand was just as if it had been cut off.

Steps hastily running away are heard. The accomplices of George were deserting him.

The Jew went again to the tavern room, took up the lamp, cut off the burned wick, turned it up high and refreshed it. Now it gave forth light merrily and victoriously, and all objects in the room could be seen plainly.

Zibal bore the lamp to the passageway. The vagabond was suffering. It was evident that he had given up resistance. The hand was swelling and the fingers were cramped. The Jew came nearer with the lamp. Fear assailed him; the fever came back. Trembling he brought the lamp so near the hand that he burned it, the fingers shook, there was a howl of pain—

At sight of the swollen hand, Zibal jumped; a wild, eccentric light shone from his eyes. He began to laugh aloud, so that the hollow passageway resounded.

Day was coming.

Sura awoke. She had dreamed she heard a cry. Leiba was not in the room. The events of the day before passed through her mind. Something had happened. She jumped up and made a light. Leiba's bed had not been slept on. He had not even lain down.

Where was he? She looked though the window. Far away upon the hills, she saw the bright twinkling of little lights moving on and on. Here they disappeared; then they came back again. People were coming from the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. Sura opened the window a little; she heard a sound of groaning. Frightened, she slipped softly down the little stairs. There was light everywhere. When she reached the threshold the sight amazed her.

Upon a high stool, his elbows upon his knees, his chin in his hands, sat Zibal. The eyes of Zibal were riveted upon a black and shapeless object, beneath which a light burned brightly.

Without a quiver of an eyelid, he watched the destruction of the hand—the hand which would not have spared him.

He did not even hear the howls of the sufferer

outside. What he looked at was so horrible he could hear nothing. He had watched with unblinking eyes, every quiver, every cramped contraction until the power of motion within it had ceased.

It was over now.

Sura shrieked.

"Leiba!"

Zibal made a sign that she was not to disturb him.

The smell of burning flesh was spreading through the corridor.

"*Leiba!*—what is it?"

Day had come. Sura shoved the bolt. The door freed from its holding, slid against the body of George, who hung there with one arm. Village people, with burning Easter candles in their hands rushed in.

"What is it? What is it?"

Then they understood what had happened.

Zibal, who had not moved before, got down from his high stool heavily. He shoved the people aside and walked toward the door.

"What's up, Jew?" some one questioned.

"Leiba Zibal" declared the innkeeper solemnly, and with a lofty gesture, "*Leiba Zibal* is going

to Jassy to tell the Rabbi that he is no longer a Jew—*Leiba Zibal* is a Christian—because, in honor of the Christ, Leiba Zibal burned candles—*at the Easter!*” And he walked away meditatively toward the hills—toward the East. He walked slowly like an experienced wanderer who knows that one must not begin a long journey with hasty steps.

**SVATOPLUK ČECH**



SVATOPLUK ČECH (1846- ) is the successor in both prose and verse of Neruda and like him he is greater as a poet than as a prose writer, and like him, too, he has tried his hand at every variety and style of writing.

Among his books of verse are—"The Smith of Lešetín," "In Shadow of the Linden"; many delightful ballades—such as "The Lark"—have been written by him.

We include perhaps his best short story—"The Journey." None of the verse of Čech has appeared in English. Of his prose we know of only one other translated story.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ČECH (Svatopluk). "The Exchange." See Underwood, Edna Worthley. ("Famous Stories From Foreign Countries.")

## THE JOURNEY

**P**ROUD Odessa disappeared in the distance. It was the first time that my eyes had beheld only sky and water. The circle of the sea rolled in splendor on all sides, and nothing disturbed the first overpowering impression. Peculiar emotions arose within me, as I gave myself over to this spectacle. The dimensions of the sea exalted my spirit, and at the same time oppressed it. At sight of the measureless horizon my chest expanded in blessed sensations of freedom.

Today the usually treacherous Black Sea was gentle. The waves rolled themselves calmly and regularly to their mountainous curves, and then spread out in white, gleaming foam. Sometimes the color was green, sometimes blue, but in the distance it was always black. Sometimes great white sea mews settled down upon the curving waves, moving their wings as if in rhythm with

the water. Sometimes arrow swift a dolphin leaped over the surface.

A long time I stood motionless there, absorbed in the strangeness of this unknown picture. Then I looked up to the complex rigging above me; at length my eyes took in the space between, where the third class passengers were gathered in gay disorder. This quarter on ships that ply the shore of the Black Sea, is a veritable ethnographical display. On two sides of this covered lower deck there extended—just as in the people's room in a mill—high benches, upon which reclined a strange assortment of men and women of different races and religions. Upon a faded rug here sits, with his legs crossed, a grave mussulman; his face expresses peace and happiness. He has procured space enough in which to enjoy himself, to place his *nargileh* and his yellow slippers with the curving toes. Some tall fellows whose faces do not arouse confidence, lie restlessly beside him. Upon their black, unkempt hair one sees the red fez. They wore brown jackets edged with black braid; brown, galloon trousers, wide at the hips and tapering narrower. At the waist they are held by a sash. From the sash shine the long handles

of pistols. They are Greeks. There, gleam the kindly eyes of an honest Russian peasant; he has blond hair and a blond beard, in caftan and flat cap; beside him, in picturesque pose leans an old time *commis-voyageur*, a dandy from Odessa, who expresses his superiority to his neighbors by whistling an aria from an opera. Over there is a rich Walachian family who are emigrating to the Caucasus. They are sunburned, dirty and disheveled, and yet they form an interesting group. The Walachian mother has all the dignity of the mother of the Gracchi. There is a tall Persian, with long smooth face and tall black cap; a crafty Armenian, a priest from Georgia in a long robe. This gayly assorted crowd sit side by side, chew garlic, count the beads of giant rosaries, talk and quarrel in various languages, and spread about an odor that rises to the upper deck.

They fitted well—these people—within the frame of this Eastern Sea, which was now lighted by the fiery rays of the sun. I enjoyed less the travelers upon the upper deck; here yawned the stupidity and stiffness of European society. A distinguished Englishman of the usual type, a French Governess, some Russian officers, a few

emancipated Russian women, smoking their inevitable cigarettes. A stuck-up Greek who had tasted the civilization of the west, who was reading the *Odyssey* with a new Greek accent, and a German professor who was promenading for his health. The outward appearance of this professor was diametrically opposed to the visions of the fabulous old world of the East, which the turbans in Odessa call up.

How out of place against the background of this measureless sea was this thin, dried-up figure, in the long, carefully buttoned coat, a green umbrella under one arm, huge gold spectacles on the nose, and a spy glass in a worn case, hanging from one shoulder. The first time my eyes rested on this figure I wished the Black Sea would rise and swallow him and his pedantry. But now when the brilliantly colored pictures of the Orient had somewhat faded from my memory, I must confess that in those days I cherished a sort of hatred for all of that Western Europe from which the German professor came.

My German professor was, to the honor of truth be it said, a man in the best years of life. He was shapely. He had thick blond hair and a blond

beard and noble features. His exterior gave at once the impression of acuteness and depth, but these qualities unfortunately were united with a prosaic pedantry which at that time particularly displeased my Oriental mood. I was convinced that he was looking upon the Black Sea for the first time, perhaps this was his first experience in traveling upon any sea. He was probably looking upon the interesting group upon the lower deck for the first time, and yet he was promenading without any admiration or interest. His dull eyes rested upon the toes of his shoes, as if all his intellectual activity were focused upon counting the number of steps in today's promenade. At length he paused and directed his walk toward my inconsequential self. He took a seat beside me, set his spectacles straight and—*was silent*. I made use of this opportunity to prove that I was correct in regard to his profession and nationality.

"It seems that we are going to have smooth weather today," I ventured in the German language. Without the quiver of an eyelash, he replied in the same language:

"Don't rejoice too soon The Pontus Euxinus has a very unstable disposition. When there is no

wind sometimes it rages, from the very depths, seamen say."

The first half of my supposition was correct, and evidently a part of the second. This "Pontus Euxinus" smelled strongly of the Professor's chair. The dry, sharp tone in which he spoke of the Black Sea irritated me. In an official voice he said to me:

"May I ask your name?"

I gave it.

"Thanks; where do you come from?"

"Bohemia, Prague."

"And where are you going?"

"To Novorossysk."

"What for?"

"On business."

"My name is Heinrich Walter. I am a professor in Munich. With my wife and nephew I am on my way to the Crimea for *practical study*."

He said these words in a tone just touched with irony. I meditated for a moment as just how best to classify the dry example of professorship.

"For geological study?"

"No—*Callobiotic*."

I looked at him amazed. My glance met his. It rested calmly upon my face.

"The sound of this word means nothing to you, am I not correct? It is a new science. It has not yet been properly introduced. I hope to perform a service to humanity by introducing it to you."

"Probably I have at least heard of it," I replied, likewise ironically.

"All that has been done up to now in this science does not deserve a name. I hope I shall be successful in laying properly the foundation, upon which, in time, a proud and noble science will be erected."

He paused a moment, then continued with fervor.

"It is not only a science, but an art—yes, the most exalted of all arts. It is not a question merely of projecting certain basic formulas, in accordance with which men—within defined limits—may enjoy the highest physical and intellectual rewards. It aims at something higher, namely, that human life instead of being a group of accidental and disconnected incidents, shall develop into a veritable work of art, inspired by one



dominating idea. Life will become, my good sir, not a drama, but an epic! You will understand that the developing of such a science is no child's undertaking. Just as a bee gathers honey from various flowers, so must I gather knowledge from all other sciences, press out their honey for the sweetening and ennobling of the life of man. I must distribute light and shade with skill, in order to create a beautiful and harmonious ideal of human existence."

I confined myself merely to a shrug of the shoulders in reply to this daring thinking. Walter paid no attention to it and went on:

"As a usual thing man is unhapy because he is dissatisfied with his lot in life. Imagination pictures happiness always as something in the distance, but which does not exist in the present. If he ever succeeds in reaching this dreamed of realization, he finds that it is not what he thought it was. As a result, he becomes bitter and disillusioned, and then, in revenge, he begins to run after some fresh phantom of happiness—some gayer butterfly of joy—which in turn likewise becomes colorless and dull under the touch of his fingers.

"My object in life, my ambition, is to make dream and reality one. I have inherited a great fortune, and although wealth is not to be despised, I live without show or luxury, just as I did when I was poor. With perfect calmness I could read—in Sevastopol—a telegram announcing the loss of my fortune." I permitted myself to doubt—in silence—the truth of this last report.

"I have just married a young and lovely girl," the professor went on. "I love her and she loves me. I am happy and I hope always to remain so. After due consideration I concluded that it is better for earthly happiness not to follow the advice of St. Paul, and that is the reason I married. I did not look for an ideal; I looked for a good, educated girl, such as are common enough, and then I proposed to her without any somnambulistic fantasies. My honeymoon was not a sense destroying orgy, after which comes disillusion. I sought in marriage instead a calm and even happiness. I am educating my wife to this. Her imagination and modern methods of education had troubled her outlook in this respect. All sorts of romantic folly floated in her head. Now I intend to cure her of this romanticism."

I imagined right then a tiny rose satin slipper, and under it the neck of the professor in a none too dignified position. He went on:

"I want her to travel, to see people and the world, and to learn to form judgments according to my instructions. But—there she comes now!"

Not only I, but the rest of the passengers upon the upper deck—looked with pleasure at the extremely pretty young woman who was approaching. With envy in my voice I whispered to Walter:

"You are living neither a play nor an epic, but instead a love song."

She was following her steamer rug which hung from the arm of a tall, handsome youth. In the youth there was that commingling of timidity and boldness which distinguishes the students of German universities. His face was smooth and fair as a girl's, and it showed an effort toward appearance of energy by a black court plaster upon the forehead, and the first shadow of down upon the upper lip. He was a youth who would be dangerous to women of a certain age.

Walter introduced me to his wife. A brief conversation convinced me that she was not one of

those adorable statues into which nature has forgotten to breathe intelligence. I must confess that she was the most seductive proof possible of the value of his new science.

On a point of the monstrous circle, whose line the green sea marked sharply from the azure of the sky, a white sail appeared. It is not necessary to travel long upon the sea to comprehend the lively impression which the appearance of a distant sail causes. What wonder that our travelers assembled upon the upper deck, when the white dot blew up over the horizon!"

Frau Walter let herself be swept along with the rest. Her husband hurried after her taking the spyglass out of its worn covering. As if with intention the nephew loitered behind. From an empty place near the pilot house, his blond curly head resting upon one hand, he observed the gay confusion of the lower deck. Soon I found that his persistent, dreamy gaze was riveted upon a young Jewess from the Crimea, whose slender, graceful body was draped in a black dress, and formed a pleasant contrast to the bright-hued crowd. We have many beautiful Jewesses with us, but beside those of the Orient our fairest Esthers are only

field daisies. This particular Jewess was not pronounced in type; indeed, one could not at a glance be quite sure of her race. I would have taken her at first for a Greek. The pure pallor of her face, the black, finely arched brows, and the large dreamy eyes, from which the poetry of the Orient looked out, made her especially attractive.

Involuntarily I compared the two, the blond youth by the pilot house and the beautiful Jewess. Both were in the first bloom of youth, and yet they were so different. They exchanged glances which expressed eagerness and longing. I recalled Heine's words of the pine in the North dreaming of a palm in the South. After watching them a while I sat down beside William and remarked.

"Just look at that handsome Jewess down there!" He looked at me shyly and blushed. Then as if conscious of his importance as a student, he moved his head carelessly and said in an unfriendly manner:

"Black, but beautiful! For such a Rachel I would not mind herding sheep."

"But you wouldn't take Leah along in the bargain, would you?"

"Why not?"

"I suppose you are a student of that new science of your uncle's, are you not?"

"He has been boring you with that has he?" was the quick reply, his features suddenly becoming animated.

"Isn't that the biggest piece of nonsense? I am genuinely sorry I was forced to travel with him. That constant school-mastering of his makes life gall and wormwood. If I am enjoying the wine in a hotel, he lifts his fingers and measures every drink. If I look at a girl he spoils my pleasure by a preachment on the subject of sexual impulses. His plan of travel disgusts me because he has thought it all out to the smallest detail. All the pleasure of traveling he estimates by that new science of his, and I rage in my heart. By heaven!—if it were not—" Here he paused and looked down. I tried to guess what that unfinished sentence might be. Evidently something chained the hot-headed youth to the uncle which he would not confide to any human ear. After a moment I said, looking him directly in the eye:

"And how does Frau Walter get on with her husband's hobbies?"

He looked at me shyly and blushed. I did not look away.

"With patience," he replied slowly. "Of course, like all women, she tries to get her own way, and sometimes she succeeds. But of course anyone can see that to a sympathetic person like her, that cold, pedantic treatment is not particularly pleasant."

"Frau Walter is a woman to be worshiped," I answered. I said the last words with emphasis. The young man did not answer; he seemed as if buried in thought and his silence continued.

The supper bell rang. The sound of this bell, to which Byron devotes a verse in his "Don Juan," impresses one, whether it be heard in the peopled palace of a king, in a silent cloister, or here upon a ship in the crystal realm of Neptune.

I went down to the little second class salon, while my new acquaintances ate in the first class salon. At the well set table I drank good Crimean wine, and listened to the Russian conversation of the other occupants of the table, who talked of shipwreck and adventures by sea, and tarried at table until evening. When again I came upon deck, the sky was grey, rain drizzled down and

cooled deck and rigging of our *Juno*, which were scorched with heat.

Upon deck the professor was walking with an umbrella.

"I have been pondering over our previous conversation, Herr Professor. We did not end it. I wish to ask you if you would put up as calmly with the loss of your wife, as you declare you would with loss of your fortune?"

"Loss of my wife? I should yield to the law of life, and with all my strength rely upon the healing power of nature, with hope that at length the painful wound would be healed."

"But what if her love for you should die? Of course you do not need ever to fear such a thing, but, for sake of argument—suppose she should be unfaithful?"

He looked at me sharply. I thought his brow clouded slightly.

In the meantime it had grown dark. We were walking in centre of the deck, around a little four-cornered light-tower whose glass walls let light into the salon of the first class. Now it was brightly lighted, and there I saw a scene which suddenly stopped my steps.



Frau Walter and the nephew were sitting facing each other upon an upholstered fauteuil, and amusing themselves by playing ball with a large yellow orange. The pretty woman threw it in dangerous proximity to the young man's nose and face. She was delighted with this childish play. Her eyes were bright, her cheeks glowed, and teasing laughter played about her lips.

I looked so persistently at this picture that at length Walter's eyes were drawn that way. When at length we took up our promenade, I observed: "You are certainly giving your nephew an excellent vacation."

"I do not enjoy the companionship of the little wind-bag, but my wife insisted upon taking him along." The last words he said as if to himself, and slowly.

Now we stood on the lookout bridge. The scene had changed. The fauteuils were side by side, and their two heads were bent so close together over the table, that the blond curls and brown curls touched. In front of them upon the table lay an illustrated weekly journal. They were looking at some pictures which showed the rendezvous of a

pretty Signora and a slender youthful page, in an old forgotten park.

The professor murmured good night and left me. I, too, sought my cabin, which they tried to make comfortable with a hard mattress and a pillow, and soon the sea cradled me to sleep.

When I came upon the upper deck in the morning, I saw a narrow strip of land, upon it some little white houses, a richly decorated mosque, two slender minarets, a Russian Church, and a number of wind-mills. Our steamer was anchoring at Eupatoria. Upon the emerald green water about us numberless little boats of different shapes and sizes, filled with gayly dressed Greeks and Tartars, were offering their services. But our ears and purses remained closed to their enticements; the time of our stay at Zozlov, which has been officially changed to classic Eupatoria, was limited. We had to content ourselves with a glance at the white city, and the multitude of craft anchored in front, whose tall swaying masts and many-hued sails presented an interesting picture.

From Eupatoria we sailed on past low bare shore land. In the distance towered mighty Tschater-

dagh (Tent Mountain), whose outlines really suggested a giant tent.

I walked about the deck for some time without catching glimpse of my interesting friends. At length the nephew appeared, took me confidently by the arm, and drew me toward an empty seat by the pilot house!

"Imagine," he began merrily, "the old man pulled us out at *day break*. I suppose you think he wanted us to observe a sunrise at sea. He wanted to tell us the story of the Crimean War before we reached Sevastopol. For this purpose he unpacked a lot of books and photographs, a map adorned with bright flags, and I think, also, a globe. He arranged this collection upon the table, placed one of us on his right, the other on his left, and began his lecture. He recited in order the Crimean Khans, reached the Russian occupation, and was just ready for the Crimean war. Just at the moment when the hero Kozarsky succeeded with unparalleled skill in freeing his ship *Mercury* from the enemy ships of three nations, I managed to slip away. I pity my poor aunt, who by this time, probably, is right in front of the harbor of Sevas-

topol, and exposed to the guns of the English, French, and Turkish fleets.”

The poor youth could not rejoice in his freedom long. Hardly had he ended his confidence when he saw the green umbrella coming up the stairs, and looking out from under it, two sharp eyes.

“Now it’s all over with me,” whispered the nephew. “But I will not surrender without resistance.”

He got up and slipped away toward the stairs which led to the ethnographical display on the lower deck. My eyes rested upon the place where he had disappeared. There upon the deck I saw a folded paper. I picked it up. Upon it was writing in German without address or subscription. The writing was as follows:

“I do not live, I dream. Always I see you before me; your sweet dark eyes look at me reproachfully. You are so near me—so near! I breathe the fragrance of the fresh flowers in your hair. My arm can reach you—and yet what an abyss separates us!”

Upon the same paper, written in a woman’s hand

were the words: "Vain longing!" Just at this moment some one touched my arm. I looked up and saw Walter. The grieved, angry expression upon his usually placid face surprised me. He was pale; his forehead was scowling.

"I see you have had the same experience that I have had. I have found a lost love letter too," he said in a voice very different from the jesting manner he tried to assume. "Look here—yesterday evening I found two. Let us compare the writing,"

He drew from his pocket book two little notes, which were just like the one I held in my hand. With a peculiar smile he handed them to me. At a glance I saw that the writing was the same. Upon these likewise a woman's hand had written. Upon one—

*"Old friends,"* and upon the other *"not enough."*

"Give me your letter," demanded Walter after hesitating; "I will make a collection of them. Perhaps before I reach the end of the trip I shall have a novel."

The bitter tone of voice provided explanation. I did not wish such a gloomy suspicion to grow in his heart, so I said:

"There's nothing of importance in them."

"No. It has not reached the climax. We'll wait for the chapters to follow. Thank you."

He took my note and put it carefully away with the others, nodded his head and walked away. I remained, meditating, where he left me, until I was disturbed by voice of the nephew.

"My uncle wasn't looking for me, was he?"

"He did not mention your name."

"Out of gratitude I'll go back and expose myself to the cross fire of the allied fleets in front of Sevastopol. Anyway, this being bossed about by my uncle is not going to last much longer. Then —*you'll see!*"

With these words he glanced up at me with a merry laugh.

I, on the contrary, had lost all inclination to merriment. Deeply meditative I watched the fine, vigorous young fellow walk away.

When I considered, in cold blood, what I had seen in this short time, the individual peculiarity of each member of the Walter family, their relations to each other, the senseless lack of tact of the husband, the youth and beauty of the wife, the handsome nephew, the scene of the day before in

the salon, the mysterious letters, and the last words of the youth, I could not put aside the fear that all was not as it should be.

Then excitement upon the upper deck drew my attention. The travelers were leaning excitedly over the railing; joy and interest were upon their faces. From mouth to mouth flew the word: "*Sevastopol! Sevastopol!*"

We were just entering the great Gulf of Sevastopol, which, with one or two other indentations, is cut out of the solid rock.

The hills on all sides, and the space of level land, gleamed brightly now under the mid-day sun, showed the ruins of those fortifications that had once been so formidable. Walls, redoubts, towers, houses. Across the Gulf the remains of the gigantic dock stared back at us from long rows of empty windows. Right beside upon a declivity, beside the ruins of numberless houses, stood the Russian Church, rejoicing in its imposing outlook. In the upper part of the harbor a magnificent stone archway attracted our attention, the remains evidently of some prince's harbor. On the other side the steep, hanging Garden of Kozarsky charmed the eye.

We sailed close to shore and landed. The landing place was a merry sight. There were crowds of people; important and unimportant figures in trim uniforms, long caftans, richly colored skirts with turbans, a woolly cap, a fez, a low hat, wide or tight trousers, in high black boots, or low, yellow slippers. From moment to moment this kaleidoscopic, bright-hued scene changed. Some heads carried baskets or boards upon which pastry was displayed for sale. Oranges, melons, fish of all colors, resembling the rainbow, enticed to eat. Some merchants sat behind a little improvised counter where they sold pickles, garlic, cabbage; others offered rose-sherbet in cheap glasses. This picture was enriched when the passengers upon the lower deck of our steamer went ashore. We, the passengers of the first and second class, waited for the confusion to subside, before going ashore to make use of the three hours given us to see the ruins of Sevastopol. The passengers hired the light, comfortable vehicle of the Russian *isvochtshik*, and the little bells of the curved *duga* chimed merrily as we drove away.

The Walter family and I determined to walk to the Boulevard Kozarsky. After we had passed



the memorial of this hero of the sea, we remained standing by a little Kiosk. Our eyes traveled delightedly over the picturesque landscape outspread beneath us. Calmly the marvelous Gulf shone at our feet, a glittering blue sapphire set in sun-burnished shores.

After we had looked long enough we went down into the city. The Professor worked himself up into such furors of Ciceronian eloquence, that his brow cleared and he became happy. The nephew appeared nervous and impatient. He looked about shyly, and from time to time his eyes rested upon the form of Frau Walter, who was fluttering along beside her husband, in unalloyed delight.

In front of a ruin, whose half-fallen wall the enthusiastic professor began to climb, the nephew suddenly felt in his breast pocket, and after he had pulled his hand out empty, he went up to his aunt and began to whisper to her. She took from her dress a pretty little notebook, tore a leaf out and handed it to him, along with a handsome pencil.

The youth sat down hurriedly near the ruins and wrote a few lines. When the zealous and inspired uncle fell down exactly at his nephew's feet,

the latter had already written the note, and returned the pencil to its owner.

We went on. Presently the pretty woman became faint, said that she had a headache, and felt so ill that she must return to the steamer. The professor was so absorbed in his study of the ruins that he let her go away unobserved.

After a while he asked me where she had gone, but he paid no attention to my answer. He signalled an *isvochtschik* and invited me to drive with him. We visited the Malakaf-Kurhan, the graveyards, and heaven knows what else we should have seen, had I not called his attention to the fact that it was high time for us to return to the steamer. And it was in fact high time. When our *troika* reached the harbor, the sailors were loosening the ropes that made it fast. We jumped out and hastened toward the ship. Just then, from among the gaping crowd a figure stepped forth and handed Walter a folded letter. He opened and read it. His face turned white; his hands trembled. When he turned the paper over and read the words on the other side, it fluttered from his hands. He stood there as if he had been struck by lightning, his eyes wide, his face white. Then he groaned and cov-

ered his face with his hands. A Greek standing near picked the paper up and handed it to him. Walter dropped his hands from his face and looked at me despairingly.

“Read that! *Deceived! Deserted!*”

I took the paper. It was the one Frau Walter had torn from her notebook and read:

DEAR UNCLE:

*While you are reading these lines I shall be far away, beyond Sevastopol. I've got to confess that that manuscript of yours about the new science—from which you read to us morning and evening, all your learned articles, have given your wife and me many an unhappy hour. So then, farewell! Our ways part. I have taken nothing with me that was yours—that is, only one thing. Probably that is your greatest treasure. But it had to be. Otherwise you would have tormented your poor wife to death. I, therefore, take this pearl with me; it rests upon my heart. The bells of the troika sound merrily in our ears. You will never be able to catch us.*

WILLIAM.

On the back of this piece of paper a woman's hand had written the words: “Pardon, Heinrich.” I recognized the handwriting of both. It was that of the piece of paper I had found upon the deck.

Sympathetically I looked at the poor husband. Then the crew of the *Juno* called to us to hasten. They pointed to the gangplank which they were ready to lift. At this moment Walter called: “Hurry, Sir!”

"And you—?"

"I am going after the fugitives."

"But how can you know in which direction they have gone?"

"Don't worry—I'll find them."

"And your luggage?"

"What do I care about that! Throw it into the sea—"

In despair he beat his breast, from which I saw a revolver gleam. One sailor seized me by the arm, another pointed toward the gangplank. I do not remember how I came upon deck. I recall hearing the voice of Walter saying: "Tell the captain that we are going by land to Ialta. And, if you will be so kind, then, send my luggage to the Hôtel Crimée."

While the steamer was pushing off I saw Walter standing in the midst of a group of people and gesticulating wildly in effort to make some Tartars understand. This was no easy thing. At length, however, they seemed to understand, anyway they began to fight among themselves, and point in various directions. After the quarreling was over Walter and one of the Tartars disappeared in a cloud of dust. I could see no more. For

just then we steamed out of the Gulf. When Sevastopol had long disappeared from view, I recalled Walter's parting words. I went to the Captain's cabin. To my great astonishment just then Frau Walter came up the stairs. My astonishment was so great that I all but shrieked, and called to her as soon as she reached the top step.

"You here—Madam?"

She looked quickly around the deck, and then at me. Her face was paler than usual, and her eyes dim. As if she had read what had occurred in my agitated face, she looked again quickly at the group of passengers on deck, and then asked anxiously:

"Where is Walter? Have you seen my husband?"

"Permit me, dear Madam, before I reply, to inquire of you if the young nephew is in the cabin?"

"William? No. He came to the steamer with me and then hastened to the city with the remark that he was going to do the rest of the sightseeing alone. From that moment I have not seen him. Ill with a headache, I lay down upon the sofa in my cabin, and suddenly I fell asleep and slept until now."

I stood in front of her confused and ashamed. I felt that her dark eyes hung upon my words. Should I tell her all? Should I tell her the foul suspicion with which her name had been darkened. And yet—the clearness of William's letter, and the words she had written on the other side. What a tangle! I longed for enlightenment.

“Well—dear Madam, I suppose I must tell you all. Yet do not be needlessly upset, no great misfortune has befallen. Let us step aside, a little where we shall not be exposed to the curiosity of the other travelers.”

“Deserted!”—she groaned. “Deserted!”

I must confess that at just this moment I felt no particular sympathy for the young woman. In fact I contemplated with a certain satisfaction her bowed head with its graceful curls.

In addition, the situation had changed since the moment when I saw Walter with the revolver buttoned within his coat; it had lost its tragic character. In fact it opened up for me a very amusing prospect. While the husband was wandering about God knows where among the mountains of the Crimea, his lovely wife was sitting beside me. And except me, she had not a soul to whom she

could turn for help or address. I was the Knight, the protector, of the deserted lady.

Frau Walter dropped her hands from her tear filled eyes to her lap and spoke to me with lips that trembled. "God knows if we shall ever meet again!"

"Do not worry needlessly, dear Madam. This little piece of land which is Crimea is not so large. Somewhere in Bakschi Serai, Simferopol, Alupka or Kaffa, your husband will find the culprit. Everything will be cleared up. They will at once start for Ialta convinced that you will have gone to a hotel there to await their arrival."

"Oh! Now I know that he never loved me. If he had, he could never have thought such a thing."

"Justice demands that I defend your husband. The complication was so arranged that there was nothing else to think. If the contents of William's letter had left a doubt, your writing upon the back of that letter, would have removed it."

"Oh, those fateful words!" she exclaimed taking out the tasteful little note-book. "This little book was my only friend. To its pages I confided my love for Heinrich. William asked me in Sevastopol for a piece of paper. I tore a leaf out

for him, without observing what was written upon it."

"Pardon me, dear Madam. Walter found three love letters in the cabin." For the friendly reader let it here be remarked that I blushed slightly. "They were love letters written by William, and upon them were words in your writing. One would suppose that these were intended for you."

"What a chain of misunderstandings! These letters were not for me but for my younger sister, with whom William is head over heels in love. He chose me to confide in, because my husband had punished him several times for this. Everywhere, where he could get hold of a piece of paper he wrote his effusions. I scolded him, too, for doing this, but I see now that Heinrich must have looked upon it with suspicion."

Now I was disarmed. I determined to remain in Ialta and help Frau Walter find her husband. She accepted my offer with gratitude, and her lovely eyes began to look happier.

One could not, indeed, with gloomy looks contemplate the scenery that confronted us now, the wildly cleft, towering Crimean coast. There were fantastically formed cliffs, making romantic



groups, lifting their heads far up into the undefiled blue. Sometimes they looked as if they had been frozen together at time of some violent and ancient war. In their multiform grouping lay a peculiar charm, and the vividness of the impression was heightened by their varied colors. Here a rock jutted out as if preparing for a leap into the sea, then a lonely group of giant stone made a background that united splendor and terror as it leaped toward the sky. Here again smooth walls of rock fell straight down into the sea, or a saw tooth formation cut deep into the land.

Steaming on we passed the mountain which is connected with the Greek myth about Iphigenia. Next we saw the cloister of the holy George, perched like a nest on the edge of a rocky wall, and the noble tower which is a part of the cloister, and which looks far over the sea and friendly Balaklava.

We were now approaching the fabulously lovely southern shore. Even now we could glimpse its fresh green land, from which the flat roofs of Tartar villages were visible, the white columns, and proud façades of princely castles; country homes, of the most charming artistry and grace, greet us

across the water. Every style of architecture is represented; English, Swiss, Gothic, Byzantine, Moorish, Arabic, Tartar. Above appears beautiful Alupta and now—now—

The dining room bell rings and—despite the verses of Byron about it—I hear nothing, I see nothing, not even the lovely woman who is standing beside me, I am staring with astonished eyes at the scene before me. Like the beautiful princess in the fairy tale the coast of Ialta—fair as Paradise, richly green as the emerald—breathes upon me its intoxication. I stand motionless on deck, the warm, inspiring wind of the South blowing about me; my eyes discover fresh loveliness from moment to moment, and I cannot look enough upon that enticing landscape. Suddenly my eyes grow dim and fill with tears; it is not easy to explain this. It was as if never before had nature presented herself to me in all her loveliness, as if my Northern nature must melt and dissolve in this glow and warmth of the South.

When the *Juno* anchored at Ialta I drew a deep breath, as if suddenly I had awakened from a dream. Now I looked about for my protégée. She stood by my side, absorbed like myself in the

beauty of the scene. The weight of my duty as protector came to my mind.

With help of a steward I carried all the bundles and packages to the deck, defended myself against the offers of assistance of some picturesquely dressed Greek rascals, and at length gathered all the belongings in a little boat, such as come out in numbers to the steamers. More than sufficient reward for my trouble was the little white finger of Frau Walter which rested upon my arm while I assisted her into the boat. In a little while we were under the hospitable roof of the Hôtel Crimée. We rented two rooms whose outer doors had a balcony in common from which there was a view of Ialta and the Sea. Soon I felt that the balcony confined me. I went out into the radiant summer world, first to the landing place, from where a long avenue of cypress trees stretched toward the country.

Next I walked along the broad, white streets toward the country estates. I breathed in with delight the pleasant air, which was spread abroad from thousands of flowers; my eyes rested upon fig rees, blooming magnolias, plane trees, olives, vines, richly gilded garden gates, behind which young,

pretty Russian women were amusing themselves and playing at ball with oranges. Even upon old grey bearded Tartars who sat upon their sorry nags with a certain elegance, I looked with pleasure, and upon the nets which the fishers were hauling in, and the baskets filled to the rim with little fish.

In the meantime night had come, a night of beauty. The sky was strewn thickly with stars, perfume of flowers floated up to the balcony, and there I stood alone leaning upon the railing. Until late in the night I stood there. I do not know whether I expected that my charming neighbor would leave her sultry room and come out on the balcony, in order to enjoy the splendor of the night, but I do know that until dawn I could not sleep.

The next day while we were drinking our tea, I unfolded to Frau Walter my plan for finding her wandering husband. And this plan I proceeded to put into execution.

Slowly I rode in the direction of Alupka and one hundred times I paused, sometimes before a neat villa whose windows were all but covered with flowers, sometimes by an abyss in whose yawning depth a foaming river ran. Then again I

turned toward the sapphire Gulf, over whose surface sea mews were spreading their white wings.

At Alupka I turned about and came back to Ialta. Then accompanied by a Tartar I rode to Bakschi Serai, stood long by the fountain Marie Potocki, and spent the night in what was once the palace of a Crimean Khan. From this journey likewise I returned without information. In Gurzuf and Kaffa I found no trace of Walter. I must say that I did not exhaust a great deal of effort in looking for him; he will come back to Ialta without doubt.

From these expeditions I returned to the Hôtel Crimée where I sat and talked with Frau Walter in the gardens. I consoled her for the failure of my efforts, and made her hope results would soon be better. She relied upon me with childish faith. How I enjoyed looking into her shining eyes, how attentively I followed the slightest gesture of her little hands! Each night I tarried later on the balcony, but my charming neighbor did not once come out.

One afternoon—the first week of our stay in Ialta was nearing an end—we were standing on the balcony looking out across the white street. Sud-

denly Frau Walter seized my arm and screamed: "Heinrich! Heinrich!" I, alone, should not have known him.

Covered with dirt, in ragged clothes, he was riding wildly along the street on a Tartar horse. A bright colored cloth was tied about his head, and the ends were fluttering in the wind. His hair hung in disorder about his dirty, sunburned face, and his beard was ragged. I limited my emotions to a smile, and said to the jubilant lady:

"Come in, please. I will inform him at once that you are here. I wish to dissipate once and for all your suspicions about his affection."

She agreed and returned to her room. I went to meet Walter.

"You here!" He called in surprise.

"I changed my plans. Well, did you find the fugitives?"

"Upstairs I'll tell you all about it," he replied in a sad voice with a shake of his head.

I led him through my room to the balcony. As we stood there he covered his face with his hands, sighed deeply and exclaimed:

"All lost! Why chase a woman whose heart is gone? I went in the wrong direction. In

Sevastopol I learned that a man and a beautiful woman, who left our ship, had hired a carriage and driven to Simferopol. I rode like lightning after them. That was a devil of an unlucky ride! I followed them like a hunter. Late in the evening I saw them get out of the wagon in front of a little house in the outskirts of Simferopol. Like a madman I ran up and knocked upon the door. A Jew opened it. I seized my revolver and tried to force an entrance. The Jew shrieked:—"Help! Help!" A young Jewess screamed and they ran upon me from all sides. I saved myself but my clothes were torn, my hat was gone and my face was bleeding. The next day I found out that I had followed a harmless Jew and his sister.

"I remember having seen them upon our ship.

"Then I hurried to Bakschi Serai, Karasn-Bazar, Kaffa, and God only knows where else, and all in vain!"

"Then you know all the Crimea and need not travel here again."

"Do not jest. I cannot stand it. Now I know for the first time how much I loved her. Without her the world is a desert. I would give my wealth, the light of my eyes, half my life, if I could find

that what I have been through these few days was only a dream."

The door opened and Frau Walter rushed into the arms of her husband. In a short time all was explained.

We sat together out of doors in the terraced garden, which was framed on all sides by emerald green vines through which the blossom cups of the night-shade shone. On the centre of a table was a giant bouquet composed of the loveliest flowers of the South. Everywhere floated fragrance. The professor, whose face now shone with the self satisfaction of the West-European, and his pretty wife, acted the lovers on a honeymoon.

"It is all clear to me now," he declared, "all but that crazy letter of William's. God alone knows what that means."

Hardly had he finished speaking, when without from the courtyard we heard a well known voice. I parted the vine leaves and looked out. In the court I saw William stepping out of a Russian *telega*. And what an appearance he presented! His handsome velvet coat was in rags and tatters. He was covered with dust and mud. The coquettish court plaster upon his brow had vanished. In its



place there was a scar. When he saw me he walked slowly toward the pavilion.

At command of the professor we sat in silence and regarded him, after the manner of stern senators of Rome. William was abashed and confused, threw a ragged cap upon the table, and, with a sigh, sank down upon a chair, and stretched his legs out. Then he took an estimating side glance at us. Our silence evidently disturbed him. He pulled the chair nearer to the table, sighed, blushed and crossed and recrossed his legs.

At length the uncle regarded him sternly and said:

"It seems you are capable of traveling about in the world alone—" The nephew observed that beneath the sternness there was a twinkle of humor.

"Oh yes—very capable. I have had a dozen first class adventures. But one thing I forgot all about—and that was money. As I sit here you could not find a single coin upon me. That is the reason, dear Uncle, that I have returned to the yoke of your tyranny, in case you are disposed to fill my pockets again."

"Very good," replied the uncle, laughing. "But tell—were you a fool when you wrote this letter?"

"I—a *fool*?"

"Who is the person you took away from me—whom you pressed to your heart?"

"Couldn't you guess? Why your pearl of pearls with which you bored your wife and me to death—nothing else."

Hereupon he drew from his breast pocket the worn manuscript of the new science. There was a burst of laughter and the professor made a grab for the manuscript.

"Well—I seem to be the fool myself."

He took the manuscript and flung it far out of the pavilion.

"I will not attempt again to analyze the beauties of life."

Four glasses, foaming with the fine wine of Crimea, rang merrily together.

The next evening I was again on ship deck. From the friendly green garden, and the flower-covered villas, the light gradually faded, and day grew dim upon the fantastic mountains of stone that rose behind charming Ialta. At last land disappeared, too, and night came down.

Farewell, beautiful Ialta!



**JAN NERUDA**

**JAN NEKUDA (1839-1891)** is one of the foremost figures of Bohemian literature. He has tried his skill at every sort of writing, but it is as poet that he is greatest, although it is not easy to pass stable judgment upon such a many-sided, changing accomplishment.

He belongs to a certain period of Bohemian renaissance which is sometimes spoken of as the movement of the sixties, a movement fruitful and far reaching. He may be said to have introduced into his tongue the feuilleton, the arabesque and the short story of form and finish.

In verse the work which he initiated so brilliantly has been carried on by Yaroslav Vrchlický and Svatopluk Čech, who are both world poets not much below the level of Pushkin and Mickiewicz.

Among the most famous of his verse productions are "Cosmic Songs," "Ballades and Romances," "Simple Motives." In addition he has published "Flowers From a Graveyard," "Parisian Pictures," "Brief and Briefer Studies," "Francesca of Rimini" (a play), and two comedies. We include two of his short stories of contemporary life.

## ALL SOULS' DAY

I DO not know how often on All Souls' Day she had been to the graveyard of Koscher, but to-day she is hurrying there again, and her feet do not bear her as nimbly as of yore. Everything else, however, was just as it used to be years ago. At eleven o'clock her heavy body got out of the *droszky*, then came the coachman carrying grave-wreaths, wrapped in a piece of white cloth, and last a five year old child, warmly dressed. This little girl had been five years old for fifteen years. Every year Miss Mary borrows her in the neighborhood.

"There, my dear! Now look—look at the crowd of people. It's a good sized crowd, isn't it? And the candles, and the little lamps, and the flowers! Go on, my child—go on! Don't be afraid. Go right ahead wherever you wish. I am coming right behind you."

The child walks timidly along. Miss Mary fol-

lows, encourages it, but she does not point out the direction which they are to take. It trots along and turns this way and that until at last Miss Mary says: "Wait, dear!" She takes the child by the hand and guides it between two graves. She takes down from an iron cross, the wreath, bleached by wind and weather, and hangs up the fresh one—made of black and white—in its place. Then she places her hand upon the cross and begins to pray. It would be too hard for her to kneel down. At first her eyes rest upon the withered grass and the grey earth, then she lifts her head. Her wide, pleasant face and blue eyes are looking into space. Her eyes become sad, her lips tremble, and tears course down over her face. The little girl is abashed, but her companion hears and sees nothing. Then she draws a long sigh as if she had just gained possession of herself again, smiles through her tears at the child, and speaks in a voice that frames the words a little harshly:

"Go now where you wish! I'm coming right after you."

Then she began again the strange promenade, and the little girl, trembling and uncertain, decides the direction. Again Miss Mary says:

"Stop!" and she goes up to another grave. There she does what she did before, and tarries perhaps a minute longer. Here she places the second withered wreath in the white cloth beside the first one, and then takes her little companion by the hand.

"You are cold, isn't that so? Well, come on—we must not delay then. We'll get into the *droshky* and drive home. You like to drive, don't you?"

After some effort they reached the *droshky*, the little child and the wreaths ahead and Miss Mary follows not without difficulty. The wheels creak, two blows fall upon the horse and they set out.

Thus it goes, year out and year in. Miss Mary, secretive and unapproachable, had attached herself to no one throughout her life. From childhood she had had but one friend, Miss Louise, who now was the faded widow of the superintendent of finance, Nocar. Today she will visit Mrs. Nocar a while. Only seldom does she visit her friend, because she goes out little, and only leaves her dwelling on Sunday morning, when she goes to mass in Nicholas church. As fat as she is she cannot join walking parties. Therefore, she is



spared by her friend Mrs. Nocar, who usually calls upon her daily. As result of sincere friendship extending over a period of years, they are one heart now, one thought.

Today especially if Miss Mary were at home alone she would be melancholy. The house would be emptier than usual. For Mrs. Nocar, too, it is a holy day. Never on any other day is she so especially careful at the coffee roasting, so particular that the cakes be light and well baked. Today her conversation is always carried on in a sort of subdued voice. They do not say very much, but what they do say, sounds monotonous. From time to time a tear shines upon the cheek and the number of their friendly embraces is increased. They sit long upon the sofa side by side, until they reach the yearly point of their conversation.

"The dear God," begins Mrs. Nocar, "has treated us both alike. I had a good brave husband and two years ago he was taken away from me forever—and he did not even leave me a little baby to take care of. Since then I am all alone. I don't know which is worse—to have and lose or not to have."

"You know, do you not," replied Miss Mary, solemnly, "that I have always complied with the will of God? I knew my life long ago. I was to have only a dream. I dreamed—when I was only twenty years old—that I was at a ball—you know, of course, that I never went to a ball in all my life. We were promenading in the splendidly lighted salon, while the music played. But the dance-salon was just like a great empty attic! Suddenly I saw couples, one after the other, walk down the great stair-case; I was the last to come—with my dancing partner. I can't recall just now how his face looked. There were only a few of us left up above there, when I turn my head and see Death drawing near to us. He wore a green velvet mantle, a white feather in his hat, and he carried a sword. Then I looked upon the stairs where the others were—and they were all gone; even my dancing partner had vanished. Then Death took my hand and led me away. For a long time after that I was in a palace and Death was there—my husband. He treated me real well and he seemed to like me, but I could not get used to him. We lived in the most astonishing splendor. There was crystal and gold and velvet.

But I did not care anything about it. I wanted to go back to the world, and my page—he was another Death—kept telling me all the time what happened there. My grief at length affected my husband and I saw it. Then I knew that I should never marry and that Death would be my bridegroom. Now, Louise, don't you see that dreams come from God? Has not a two-fold death separated my life from other people?"

And Mrs. Nocar wept and wept, although she was not listening to the dream for the first time, and she poured refreshing balm upon the grief filled heart of her friend.

The fact that Miss Mary never married is interesting. She was left an orphan early, and in possession of a comfortable two-storied house. She was not an ill-favored girl. Any one could see that today. She was tall—as only few women are—her blue eyes were good to look at, and her face, although a trifle too broad, was pleasant and the features were regular. It was perhaps, because as a child she had been too fat, and they gave her the nickname of "fat Mary." Because of fat she was a little indolent and did not take active part in the play of the other children.

When she became a young lady she did not go to parties often and limited her exercise to a daily walk. The people then all corresponded to marked types, and Miss Mary was the type of an old maid. If any of her acquaintances put to her the question, she invariably replied: "Can one not serve God, married or single?" And when anyone asked Mrs. Nocar, she shrugged her shoulders and replied: "Why she did not wish to! She could have married many times—and men of consequence—I know of two myself—good people. She did not wish to!"

I, however, know that the two men were vagabonds and not worth considering. They were the merchant, Cibulka, and the engraver, Rechner, and whenever anyone spoke of them they said—"*The vagabonds!*" They were good for nothing in every way, no mind, no character. Rechner never worked before Wednesday, and Saturday afternoon again, he did not work.

"He might have scraped together a little competence because of his dexterity," said a friend of my mother, Mr. Hermann—but he didn't like to work. And the merchant Cibulka would rather be in a wine shop than in his own place of business.

He did not get out of bed until broad daylight, and then when he went behind the counter he was sleepy and cross. He learned French, I believe, but business was something he did not care to learn, and his clerk ran the shop.

They were always together, these two, and if a spark of nobility flamed up in the soul of one of them, the other was sure to be on hand to extinguish it. But you could not find two more jovial companions—in the beer-hall or the wine shop. Over the narrow, smooth-shaven, pointed face of Rechner, there was always a smile twinkling, like sunshine over fields. His lofty brow, from which long chestnut brown hair was brushed back, did not show a furrow, and about the thin, pale lips played scorn and irony. His thin, dried up body, usually clothed in the yellow-brown that suited him so well, was extraordinarily active and expressive.

Cibulka, his friend, wore black and gave himself the airs of a distinguished gentleman. Like Rechner, he was thin, but he was larger. His small head had a low forehead. It sheltered sparkling eyes under thick, dark brows. The black hair was combed forward toward the face.

A long, soft black beard shaded his well formed mouth and under his beard one could see snow-white teeth. His face expressed good humor, lack of control, and emotion. Usually he restrained his laughter as long as he could, and then it burst forth. Then again his face assumed its usual mask. They understood each other. A little twinkle in the eye, and each knew everything the other thought. But they did not have many friends, their jokes were too rough for their honest neighbors. They had the reputation of dissipated men who squandered life. Cibulka and Rechner did not care what the others thought of them. They reveled and played pranks throughout the entire city. They even went as far as distant Frantischek<sup>1</sup> when, late at night, laughter echoed through the streets, it was Cibulka and Rechner coming home.

They were the same age as Miss Mary. They had attended with her the Nicholas Parochial School, but since then they had *never troubled themselves about her*. They met occasionally upon the street and an indifferent nod was the greeting. Then suddenly, Miss Mary received a

<sup>1</sup> Frantischek—a place on the right bank of the Moldau.

letter written in a fine, almost microscopic hand. When she had finished the reading, her hands sank upon her lap, and the letter fluttered to the floor.

HIGHLY ESTEEMED MISS:

*You will be surprised that I dare to address you, I and no other. I was never bold enough to approach you—but—not to indulge in circumlocutions—I love you! I have loved you for a long time. I have taken council with myself and come to the conclusion that I can find happiness only by your side.*

*Miss Mary! Perhaps you will be astonished and reject me. Perhaps false reports have blackened my reputation with you, and you will scornfully shrug your shoulders. I must beg you not to hasten to say the decisive word. I make bold to say that in me you will find a husband who will try to make you happy. Only one thing I beg. Consider the offer. Four weeks from today I await the decision—not earlier, not later.*

*With most passionate devotion,*

WILLIAM CIBULKA.

Miss Mary felt as if she had an attack of vertigo. She was in the thirties, and this was her first love letter. She had never thought of love, and no one had ever paid her any attention. Lightning darted through her head, blood pounded in her temples, and she breathed with effort. She was not in condition to formulate any sort of thought. Only in midst of the flashing, red lightning, she saw the gloomy-looking Cibulka.

She picked up the letter from the floor and read it a second time. How beautifully it was written, how tender! She could not bring herself to con-

ceal the letter from her friend. Without being able to utter a word she handed it to her.

"See, see"—observed at last Mrs. Nocar. Her face expressed confusion and surprise. "And what are you going to do?"

"I don't know, Louisa."

"You have time enough to think. Of course it is possible—but, you know how men are— *But* — And yet why should he not be in love with you? I'll make some inquiries about him."

Miss Mary was silent.

"Listen! Cibulka is a fine looking fellow! His eyes are like coals, his beard, too, and his teeth—I say his teeth are like pure sugar. He is really very good looking."

Mrs. Nocar bent over and embraced her speechless friend. Miss Mary was the color of purple. Just one week later on returning from church, Miss Mary found another letter. She read it with increasing astonishment.

**ESTEEMED MISS:**

*Do not be angry that I make bold to write to you. The reason of it is that I wish to marry, I am in need of a housekeeper and I have no acquaintances. My business does not permit me to devote my time to pleasure. As I look about, it always seems to me that you are a dear, good young lady. Since I am a good man, it*



*would not be a bad match for you to marry me. I have a business, and I can work, and, with God's help, we shall not want for anything. I am thirty one years old. You know me and I know you. I know that you have property, but that will not do any harm. I must state emphatically that my home cannot get on any longer without a mistress, and that I cannot wait, therefore I beg you to give me an answer within fourteen days at the latest, because in case you refuse me, I must look elsewhere. I am no dreamer, I cannot string together fine words, but I am capable of devotion, and until the time expires, I am*

*Your devoted*

JOHN RECHNER, Engraver.

"He writes just like any every day man," observed Mrs. Nocar in the afternoon. "Look here, Mitzi, now you have a choice between the two. What are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do?" echoed Miss Mary like one in a dream.

"Do you like one better than the other? Now be honest— Does one please you? And which one?"

"William," breathed Miss Mary, blushing.

Cibulka had become William. Rechner was lost. It was decided that Mrs. Nocar, as the more experienced of the two, should write the letter to Rechner, and then Miss Mary was to copy it.

But scarcely had a week passed when Miss Mary came to her friend again with another letter. Her face beamed with satisfaction. The letter read:

## ESTEEMED MISS:

*There is nothing that is wrong, everything has its place. If I had known earlier that my dear friend, Cibulka, had asked for your hand, I should not have made a like venture. But he said nothing to me, and, therefore, I knew nothing. I have already told him everything, and I retire because he is so fond of you. I beg you not to laugh at me. That would not be kind; in addition I can look for happiness elsewhere. It is too bad, but that doesn't make any difference.*

*Please forget that I am your devoted*

JOHN RECHNER, Engraver.

"Now you are out of the puddle," affirmed Mrs. Nocar. "God be praised!"

Miss Mary was alone, but today solitude was so sweet. Her thoughts flew to the future, and they were so alluring, that she went over them again and again. Gradually her thoughts achieved a certain plasticity; they wove themselves into unity, and they represented a beautiful life.

The next day Mrs. Nocar found her friend ill. She lay upon the sofa, her face was white, her eyes were blurred and red. The friend was so startled she was hardly in condition to inquire the cause. Tears filled Miss Mary's eyes, then she pointed to the table. Upon the table lay another letter. Mrs. Nocar had foreboding of something amiss. The letter was indeed serious enough.

## ESTEEMED MISS:

*I, too, am not permitted to be happy. The dream is over, I press my hand to my brow, my head is dizzy with pain.*

*But—no—I cannot take the road which has been paved by the hopes of my one, my only friend! Poor friend—as poor as I!*

*To be sure you have not yet decided, but what decision would be possible now? I could not live in happiness, while I knew that my dear John was in despair. Even if you should now lift to my mouth the cup of joy—I should not dare to take it!*

*I am determined. I renounce everything. I beg only for one thing: do not think of me with scorn.*

*Your devoted*

WILLIAM CIBULKA.

“That’s pure Idiocy,” declared Mrs. Nocar, breaking into uncontrollable laughter. Anxiously she looked across at Miss Mary.

“Well—truly!” repeated Mrs. Nocar, and sank back in her chair in meditation.

“Good people—both—anyone can see that. But you don’t know men, Mitzerl! Such nobility does not last; pretty soon men throw everything to the wind and think only of themselves. Let it all rest, Mary. They’ll talk it over together. Rechner is practical, but Cibulka—Cibulka is madly in love with you. Cibulka will surely come!”

Mary’s eyes took on a dreamy expression. She believed her friend, and her friend believed her own words. They were both so honest, so free

from suspicion; so unworldly. They would have been deeply shocked, if they had known it was all a well planned joke.

"Let it alone—he will come. They'll talk it over together!" assured Mrs. Nocar when she went away.

Miss Mary waited and her thoughts wove themselves again into the former visions of happiness.

Miss Mary waited, and month after month passed by. Sometimes when she took her daily walk she met the two friends. Since they were both quite indifferent to her, they paid no attention to the meeting. Now it seemed to her these meetings were too frequent.

"They'll come around—you'll soon see," reassured Mrs. Nocar.

At first Miss Mary thought it proper to lower her eyes, but after a time she gained courage and looked at them. They described a wide circle about her, each one bowed most politely and then looked down. Did they ever observe and understand the wave of questioning in Miss Mary's eyes? But I do know that she never once noticed how the two rascals bit their lips and attempted to keep from smiling.

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Thus a year passed. In the meantime Mrs. Nocar heard all sorts of stories of ill-repute about them. And carefully she told some of them to her friend. They were degenerate men of bad reputation. Everyone said they would come to a bad end.

Miss Mary was deeply grieved at these communications. Was she guilty of any wrong doing herself? Her friend did not know just what to do.

A second long year and they buried Rechner. He died of consumption. Miss Mary was prostrated. The practical Rechner, as Mrs. Nocar always spoke of him—and love, had it killed him?

Mrs. Nocar then remarked with a sigh: "Now you have decided! Now Cibulka will not delay. Now he will come."

She kissed Mitzerl, who was white and trembling, upon the forehead.

Cibulka did not delay. Four months later he was carried to the graveyard of Koscher. Inflammation of the lungs caused his death.

It is now more than sixteen years since they have both slept there in peace.

On All Souls' Day, for no amount of money in the world, would Miss Mary decide whose grave she should decorate first. An innocent, five year old child must make the decision, and wherever the child leads, there the first wreath is placed.

Beside the graves of Cibulka and Rechner, Miss Mary bought place for a third grave. People say she has a mania for buying the graves of people of whom she never heard. Mrs. Magdalene Topper lies in one of these graves. God rest her soul! She was a good woman. The grave of Mrs. Topper lies right between the graves of Cibulka and Rechner. I should insult the intelligence of the reader if I should tell him, why I think Miss Mary bought the grave.

## FOOLISH JONA

**F**OOLISH JONA was as if made for the amusement of unrestrained youth. He was about eighteen years old but he looked like a thirteen year old child. When he came back from the huckster or the merchant where his mother was in the habit of sending him on errands, the boys ran after him and teased him:

“Jona! Foolish Jona!” they called. He kept on his way slowly, just as if he saw and heard nothing putting forth all his strength to control himself, and breathing heavily. Sometimes he was so frightened that he trembled, and his thin legs were scarcely able to uphold his weak body. When they barred his way and began to threaten him, he turned upon them his expressionless, white, moon-face, that looked as if it were embossed in wax, and a timid questioning peered out of his eyes. For a moment he stood dumb and motion-

less, as if death were stretching hands toward him, and then sought to escape one way or another.

"Jona! Jon-a-a!" they called after him in the street boy jargon, as soon as they saw him begin to tremble. He never tried to defend himself. As soon as he reached home he gave over his purchases and then sat down in a corner by the oven.

"Come here, dear little brother! Take your stool and sit by me," coaxed his sister, who was only a year older. She was a pretty, slender, yellow haired girl, and she put her sewing aside at once.

He dragged the stool slowly along to her feet. She took the poor confused head to her breast. He sobbed as if his heart would break. She petted and caressed him, restraining her own tears with difficulty.

"I'm not foolish, am I?" he at length managed to say. His weak voice trembled.

"Of course you are not! You have sense, little brother. Let them talk!"

"And you like me, don't you—and I am not foolish!"

And over the face of the idiot there spread something that resembled a smile.



"Now get your violin—and play something!"

"I don't want to hear any more of that noise of his now! He can play at night all he wants to—up on the roof," grumbled his mother. Jona sat where he was and kept looking up at his sister. He watched her slightest movement.

The mother and the brothers did not love him. He had only his sister, and to her he clung with all the emotion of his weak mind. But in the neighborhood it was said that he was inspired by the Holy Ghost. No one taught him to play upon the violin. And no one could imitate him. He had never had a teacher and he played only his own pieces. And they were strange and sad and foolish, like himself.

Jona lived in the same house where I lived as a child. He knew me. Whenever he met me he nodded his head and smiled. I can truthfully say, that although I was a child myself, too, I never injured or annoyed him. There was some thing about his wax-like face that was sacred for me. My childish imagination saw in it a resemblance to the dead, waxen faces which I had seen under glass behind the altars in the churches.

It was Saturday evening. The late summer twilight veiled everything in a mystical veil. The sky was blue and at the same time dark, and here and there trembled silver stars like the thoughts of the saints, and between swam the great, yellow moon in all its splendor, throwing light upon lowly huts, and proud, towering churches.

The unusual activity which is common in homes on Saturday night, had gradually become quiet. The women, who had been so busy earlier and had been talking loudly on the wooden balconies, the stairs, and in the court yard, had gone to bed. Only on one balcony of the third story, a girl and a young man were engaged in conversation. They were betrothed, and the next day they were to be married. Pretty Mitzerl, Jona's sister, was to be the bride, and a diligent young workman in the factory, the groom. He had just been offered a more lucrative position in the country and because of this, the wedding was to be hastened.

They had sat here some time. While people were still up and about, indoors, they talked in whispers, as if they feared the outside world. But now that there was silence everywhere, their con-

versation could be heard, as if they wished the calm and splendid night to bear witness to their happiness, their pledge, their plans.

There was one person in their neighborhood who was speaking his feelings just as plainly as they, but it did not disturb them. But the emotions which he expressed were not so happy, so confident, and care free. Foolish Jona was playing his strange, fantastic music on the roof. People said that this speech of music could not have come from his own head, which was confused and dim. When his white fingers swept the vibrating strings, now loudly, now softly, when his bow described mighty and majestic tones, the listening people said that it was the Holy Ghost that spoke.

The conversation of the lovers accompanied without any interruption the sad violin song upon the roof. They were too much interested in each other, and too much accustomed to his music, to pay attention to it. Jona himself did not see them because he was playing upon the roof above their heads.

The house in which we were living was old fashioned. It had a saddle roof which, toward the street and court, had two projections. In fine

weather Jona took his violin and hid himself in the depression between the roofs. He was sitting concealed there when the young man came to see his sister, and he was playing madly as if he would never weary. In fact his improvisations were nothing short of works of art.

Tonight suddenly he stopped in the midst of an unfinished passage, just as if the strings had refused to obey him. The hand that held the violin dropped limply down, but his haggard face, which was turned toward the moon, was as if hardened to stone. After a little time, he got up slowly. Carefully he placed the violin and the bow upon the roof, and then walked softly as if he were afraid of hearing the sound of his own feet. He walked to the edge of the roof. Here he leaned against a spout and looked down upon the pair of lovers. A cloud drifted across the moon. They were talking about him now in lowered voices.

"I think your brother is unusually sad to-day! Is he going down hill, do you think?" inquired the young man.

Jona nodded his head.

"He is always sad—poor fellow—and especially so the past few days," replied Mitzerl. "He keeps

asking me if I am really going away from him. You'll let me take him with me, won't you?"

"Not at first. Later, perhaps you can have him." Mitzerl embraced him. Jona drew slowly back from the edge of the roof and walked carefully away to his place. Here he sat down again, rested his head on his hand and looked up at the moon. Over his cheeks rolled tears but no sound of sobbing was heard. His lips opened slowly and he said in despair: "*I knew it! She doesn't love me so well as she does him!*"

He sat there a long time, and tears rolled over his face. As if grief were choking him, he took the neck cloth from his neck, and with it dried his eyes. At length he got up quickly and disappeared. The violin and bow he left upon the roof.

Jona had spent many nights upon the roof, so they did not look for him until the next day when Mitzerl was putting on her wedding dress. Then they found him. He had hanged himself with his neck cloth. It was some months later when Mitzerl celebrated her wedding.

**LAZAR K. LAZAREVIĆ**

**LAZAR K. LAZAREVIĆ** (1851-1891) like the Russian Chekov, was both man of science and artist. He devoted his youthful years and his life to the practice and study of medicine, having been appointed in 1885 as physician to the King of Serbia. During the war between Turkey and Serbia (1876-78) he served as surgeon, and after that he headed the staff of a hospital in Belgrade.

As a writer he has reproduced humble life oftenest, and he has left some imperishable portraits of old Serbian characters which can no longer be found to-day. He has that peculiar mental equipment, which is found almost exclusively among the Balkan people, the union of sentiment and ironic humor. He is considered a masterly writer of the short story of peasant life as it is understood in Slav countries.

## THE ROBBERS

I WAS riding with a soldier. It was one of those summer days when one would fight his best friend who had said that the hottest summer is preferable to the coldest winter. The sun poured down heat in a way to burst one's brain.

Across the fields of ripening wheat heat vibrated and trembled, and rose in waves toward the sun. The trees with their dry and withered leaves looked like sick people who were longing for a drink of water. The cattle in the fields were suffering and seeking the shade of the old apple trees. Not a bird moved; exhaustion lay upon nature, which seemed herself to have lost consciousness.

In the brain there was a hideous emptiness—a Sahara! One felt heavy and weary. It was not easy to breathe. I began to fear that I should never reach the little village alive.

But when at length I did get there I was like a



gourmand who salts and peppers his soup before he tastes of it; so I wished a place of rest and comfort before eating. I was also concerned not to neglect my business, and I made haste to attend to my duties, and while I was thus engaged I was enjoying in prospect the rest that would be mine in the evening, and sleep.

Who has not ridden a day in the heat without water, and then rested at night in a pleasant place, does not know what enjoyment is. I could not, of course, foresee that that night I was not to close an eye. But that is the way it happened.

The inn was a poor, tumble down, dirty place in which the "room for gentlemen" was painted in such a manner that it looked like a coffin. All the rooms smelled of stale fish and poor brandy. So you can understand the pleasure with which I accepted the invitation of Ugricic to stay all night with him. That very day his brother's son—who had finished his time of service in the army—returned. It was a large peasant house. The owner was well to do; the family was merry and good natured and they treated me royally. Most of all I enjoyed the good appearance of Ugricic's brother's daughter. A fresh colored, handsome

peasant, vibrating with life and strength. She walked gracefully and firmly, and she was shapely.

We ate supper out of doors under the nut tree. She waited on us throughout the evening without speaking a word. She ushered me into the house, in the middle of which was the living room, in which there was a large fire place. Opening out of this room were two bed rooms. The one to the right was given to me. It was furnished with a wooden bed strewn with fresh hay, on top of which a sheet was spread and a pillow placed.

Beside the bed was a small table, and under the window a bench. On the wall hung a Turkish scimiter suspended by a strap that was torn and old. Beside the scimiter were two flint-stone pistols. This completed the furnishing.

I cannot accustom myself to the unlovely Serbian custom of having a young girl pull off one's dirty boots. I did not permit her to do it and called the soldier.

She looked down at my boots and then she looked at me. Should I ask her to take a seat? She had not done so. What should I say to her? I made an attempt at conversation.

"Have you eaten your supper, Stana?"

"Not yet."

"Why not?"

"Well—!"

"Do you always eat so late?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because of the work."

"You have to wait on the older people first while they eat?"

"Yes."

"And then comes your turn?"

"Yes!"

"Did you know that in the city the women-servants and men-servants eat together?"

She covered her mouth with her hand, and one half her nose, turned her head to one side, smiled shamefacedly and shrugged her shoulders.

"Isn't it better that way?"

She still held one hand to her face, and again lifted her shoulders.

"I advise you to marry a boy from the city."

She dropped her hand, seized one side of her skirt and shook it to and fro. Then she turned her face completely away and spoke as if she were addressing the wall.

"Do you want to wash your feet?"

"No, I do not. Go now and eat your supper. You have worked enough for one day."

"Then God be with you," going out without looking in my direction. I told the soldier to go to bed. I proceeded to hang my revolver upon the bed-post. Then I undressed, opened the window, and lighted a cigarette. At last I blew out the candle and stretched myself, wearily, upon the bed. Ah—what happiness was this!

Through the window the warm wind of summer refreshed me, and the new-mown hay I lay upon was sweet to smell. A cricket chirruped—for the rest there was silence. But I could not sleep.

Thoughts persecuted me, they were not exactly unpleasant thoughts, and I gave myself up to them, although the night was growing late.

It pleased me, too, to call up the picture of Stana. To be sure there was nothing romantic about her, but I was delighted with her vitality and her blooming youth.

Gradually pictures and thoughts grew dim. I saw Trifors, the coachman, riding upon a pump handle, and then he spread a cow's skin out. Be-

hind a door something rattled. I turn my head to see Stana carrying a cluster of ripe wheat heads. Just at this moment a wagon shaft hits me and pierces my body. I jump, strike my head against the bed-post, and sleep is all over for me.

I do not wish to light the candle, but it must be near midnight. Then the outer door opened softly, and I heard an indistinct noise. Through the crack of my door I can see the fire still burning in the kitchen hearth. By degrees the noise grows louder. The first words I heard were:

*"He—in there, sleeps."*

That was a man's voice. A woman replied:

"Of course!"

As God is good to me that is Stana.

I consider a moment whether to get up and join them. My hand was even reaching toward the door latch, when it occurred to me that I would probably be in the way.

Should I look and find out who it was? I peered through the crack in the door. She was evidently sitting there with her brother.

"Now you see, sister, I have served in the army and been about in the world. Now I'm through with it—it is behind me. Now I have something

different to see to—if God is good, I will marry you off and then take a wife for myself — I—”

She was silent.

“Do you know something? Look here—I know all about it. I wish you had told me yourself instead of making me hear it from other people. And then—besides—you know I hate him.”

She was still silent.

“I—I want you to know—I know him well. He better get it out of his head. I will not let you marry any one poorer than I am. I’ll find a fellow for you myself—and a fine one!”

She got up, went to the wood basket, took a piece and threw it upon the fire. He, likewise, turned his back to me. He spoke slowly then as if he were weighing each word: “I’m next to him—that fellow—that Trino. He needn’t run about my house—and my sister—I won’t put up with any tricks from him.”

Then he went on, his voice rising higher in anger: “Who is he and what is he? *A German!* That’s what he is, sister. He came from Germany. I—I know all about it. When he first came he had some papers—dirty and worn—about as large as your hand. He took them to Jews in the vil-

lage and they gave him money for them. Now he hasn't even any more of them. He is as poor and as bare as a stone. Just has that little farm. Who knows where he found money to pay for it? Yes, yes! And what kind of papers are they? I know that—too! Once he had a piece of writing from the German Emperor—to our head officer. It said to seize Trino. But no!—he sold some more papers—and got some money and he gave the money to the officer, who said to him: 'Go home. Behave yourself well. You are a Serbian, and a Hungarian is no better than a Turk. He does not believe in God or the Mother of God.' Now—how's that! And how does it happen that the officer says to him—whenever he is in the village, he slaps him on the back and calls: 'How are you, my hero?' There's a brave one for you! He bullies all the small fellows. But he don't dare touch a good strong one! That's a fact! Once—before I was a soldier—I got drunk and cursed his German mother. He didn't say a word. *Not one word!* Only—'Why do you do that?'

"I reply:

" 'Oh—just because!'

"Then he—'Let up! Let up!'

"I replied: 'You just come over here if you dare!' and to that he answered:

"'I don't want to, Zivko—don't want to.'

"And I—'You don't dare to, you big blunderer—' When Radojka Milicie called him a German, he wanted to beat her, and then he began to cry, when the teacher began to explain that he wasn't a German but a good Serbian. He cursed the village people when they called him a German. And how he looks. Don't know how to cross his trouser straps like us—goes around like a cripple. And his mother is a German, even if she wears a done-up braid. That don't prove anything. And I know, too, that Germans worship holy St. Martin! He does. Don't that prove it? More than that he cuts grain *with a scythe!* That's the truth. And I know all about the way you flirted with him the day all the peasants helped Stoyevic! I tell you not to look at Trino again. I'll curse his German mother tomorrow again—and then you'll see. He's a coward. He does not dare do a thing!

Some one knocked softly and the two jumped up. Three men entered. I could only see one. He was young, handsome, and wore silver buckles on his coat. The face was blackened with powder,



weapons were stuck in his belt, in his hand he carried a pistol.

"Good evening," he said harshly.

The girl was afraid but Zivko replied:

"Bad luck to you if it is God's will."

I saw no more for the three men had closed the door behind them, they came nearer and leaned against the very crack through which I was looking. I heard noise—then groans—and the suppressed cry of Stana:—"Robbers!"

I was terrified. I procured my revolver and went back to the door again. Just at this moment I heard at my window—"Pst pst!" and I turned.

"Sir, give me Zivko's pistol from the wall there, quickly! Do not hesitate. I am Trino Trifunov. Quick—there are robbers here! Quick, quick!"

The danger was urgent. I understood and concluded that this man must be Trino, the German, Stana's weapon. I did not delay but handed him the pistol. Would a robber ask me to lend him a pistol?

Now it was my turn. I saw that my revolver was in condition. And while I did it I trembled like an aspen leaf. For the first time in my life I realized that I did not carry this weapon about with

me in vain; but I confess I was a good deal more afraid of my own revolver than of the robbers. How could I kill a human being! On the contrary—I would sooner have died myself.

“Hands up! Surrender!” they thundered by the outer door. That was enlightening to me. I opened my door, stepped to the threshold holding my revolver and began to holler:

“Surrender! Surrender!”

Outside I saw a man who held a pistol, aimed at the robbers, one of whom held Stana’s mouth so she could not call, while the other was strangling Zivko, who was beginning to turn blue.

For a second the robbers hesitated in their work. One fired toward the rescuer in the door; the second struck with his yatagan the chain that held the iron kettle over the hearth, and it fell, putting out the fire. Then two shots were fired. Darkness reigned.

I began to fire at the ceiling to give myself courage. I was very careful not to hit anyone.

Then there was confusion. Suddenly someone was shoved into the room which was mine. I could not see who it was. Then I heard some one slip up to a door and shove the bolt.

Now an alarm had been given outside. Evidently two of them were here. The fire flickered up for a moment.

"Let me alone, Trino," called Zivko, and threw himself upon the floor. He felt a hand clutch his throat.

Outside there were shrieks and sounds of loud voices. Old Ugricic was making his way along, carrying a hatchet, and the younger fellows with anything they could pick up. One carried a candle. All were frightened. It was just as if a wild animal had broken loose, and everyone was saying:

"What's the trouble? What's the trouble? Where is it?"

At length the neighbors came hurrying in and then there was noise and confusion. House and yard were filled with people, moving about and asking questions.

In the middle of the kitchen, or rather the living room, stood a young, vigorous man, with the belt and head-covering such as are worn here. He wore very wide trousers, and shoes. That was Trino. Around him the crowd surged. He did not speak and seemed greatly excited. Zivko,

covered with blood and wounds, was rubbing his neck. Stana, white as a piece of linen, was standing in one corner. She evidently could not pull herself together from the fright.

Then the head man of the village arrived, the clerk with a gun and a bottle of ink, and the school master with the broken leg of a chair.

"What's the trouble?"

Zivko was scratching his back.

"This is it—that criminal Nicodemus has fallen upon the village—and our house. And if it had not been for him—he points to Trino—I would have lost my head and God only knows what would have happened."

"Where are they? Follow me, people, with your weapons! Let's pursue them. Quick! Catch them!" shrieked the town clerk.

"They have escaped," was the reply.

"By the devil's mother one escaped—the others were caught," explained Trino.

He pointed to the door of my room.

"My dear little brother, they have jumped out through the window," I answered.

"Yes, by the devil's mother. Isn't your soldier under the window?"

We were all amazed.

"Take your weapons! Surround the house! Be careful all of you—they'll defend themselves!" commanded the head of the village.

"Give me the ax!" suggested Trino. "Here are your pistols lying on the floor."

In fact on the floor were three, four pistols. Trino tried to open the door but it did not yield. He lifted the ax, and struck with the back of it against the door, which fell open. At that instant a shot came from there, grazing his head, taking away his cap, and then hitting the ceiling. We had completely forgotten the two pistols belonging to Zivko which hung on the walls of that room.

"Now go ahead, brothers!" commanded the head man of the village. "Go ahead! City clerk, have you a weapon?"

Despite the city clerk, the robbers showed an inclination to defend themselves, but when Trino threatened with the ax they threw away their yatagans and surrendered.

They had already made a hole in the wall with their knives, and if we had delayed they would have escaped. We captured them. We found we

had the robber chief Nicodemus and one companion.

"Now bring the third, Andrew! Bring him here!" commanded Trino.

"What third do you mean?"

"The one who kept watch," replied Trino. "I tied him to a plum tree under the window, and the soldier who is with the gentleman guarded him," declared he, turning to me.

"You are another Kraljevic Marko."<sup>1</sup>

While this was going on Zivko stood lost in thought, without paying any attention to anyone. Then he looked at Trino, dropped his eyes and walked up to him.

"Trino, brother, do not be angry. I thank you like a brother. That—you know!"

His eyes were wet.

"If you like, we will be brothers—we will kiss."

Trino did not answer. He wiped his mouth with the skirt of his shirt, and then they kissed. Everyone praised Trino and wondered at his bravery. Zivko dug around on the hearth for ashes to put on the wound on Trino's head.

<sup>1</sup> The national hero of Serbia.

"Now," said the city clerk to Trino, "you will receive the two hundred ducats reward for the capture of Nicodemus."

Trino started in surprise. Quickly he looked across at Stana, who blushed to the ears, and who wished to run away.

"Wait! Where are you going?" called Zivko, who was still by the hearth and had overheard the village clerk's words. "Will you desert my house like this?"

Day was coming. They tied the robbers still more securely. Brandy was brought in and Trino and Zivko kept embracing each other.

And Stana?

She was waiting like a child who cries for a plaything, and then at length gets it. Her cheeks were like ripe peaches, and laughingly she turned her eyes from time to time upon Zivko.

On the day of the Assumption of the Virgin, I saw in the market square, Trino and Zivko, Stana and her mother. Stana wore the headdress of married women.

I met there, too, the head man of the village. I remembered the adventure and said to him:

"Tell me—who is this Trino. What kind of a fellow is he?"

"An honest, hardworking fellow. He was not born here, and once he served in the army. But once when an Hungarian officer cursed his saint he ran a bayonet through him. And then he made his escape to Serbia.

Twilight came on. The dancing grew merrier. Trino's shoe strings and leggings were worn just like those of Zivko. He flung his legs and leaped about merrily in the dance. People crowded about, called, shrieked and drank. The dust was so thick one could not breathe. Roast meats were served, guns roared, glasses were broken, bag-pipes shrilled; the scent of food floated about. The gayly decorated Zivko boasted about his new brother: "No one born is strong enough to wrestle with him. There isn't any other Trino—he is a genuine Serb!"





**XAVER ŠANDOR-GJALSKI**



## NAJA

FOR some time I had known that my companion Pero was unhappy. He was silent and self contained, but whenever I was with him for any length of time I felt that something weighed heavily upon his soul.

One evening we were walking by the bank of the Danube, in the neighborhood of D——. It was a warm night of summer. Friendly little stars mirrored themselves in the water, when the thin clouds slipped off them. From the village the wind brought the sound of violins, and from the thickets called nightingales. Below rushed the river, and from a black, unsightly mass some distance away, came the ponderous rolling of a mill-wheel. Then from the mill or from a boat, rose the voice of a girl in song. Pero started nervously and then paused:

“That’s *her* song!” He stood in silence until

the song died away upon the darkness. Then he told me his story. Here are the words:

“When I think of her I am overwhelmed with grief and longing. I saw her first in the forest. I was hunting quail, but the heat was so great I was forced to seek shelter of the trees. She stood near with her herd, stitching busily on a bright colored apron. I paused to look at her. I had never seen such a beauty before. It was not easy to find words to address her. At last I asked her, I think, the way to the village. She did not answer at once. She seemed more engrossed in her sewing and she did not even look at me. I repeated the question, whereupon she replied in an unfriendly manner, and more with her hand than with words.

“Fearful heat!” I exclaimed, wiping the perspiration from my forehead. I took the gun from my shoulder and seated myself upon a tree stump.

The girl acted as if I were not there.

“Who are you, child?”

She did not answer. She moved on a little way as if she were about to follow the herd.

“Can’t you open your mouth?” I began

roughly, like a peasant. "Why don't you tell me your name?"

"What business is that of yours? I'm from that village—*there*—" she said, as in the act of going away. She stopped sewing and called the herd together which had scattered.

"What business is that of mine? Among Christian people it is customary to tell your name when it is asked. Are you Tejka or Miljenka or Mara—?"

"No; I am the Naja of Toscha Nedeljković."

Then she became very red and ran away.

The devil take the hunt!—I thought, and turned and followed the girl.

After that I was in the forest every day with Naja. At first she was shy, and would not come near. Sometimes she was ugly tempered if I approached her as a peasant would. By degrees she became accustomed to me and confiding, and said that I was not just like the other gentlemen. She chattered about her household duties, the gossip of the village. She declared the village boys were angry because she worked no more in the spinning room, and did not join in the *Kolo* dance.

"And why don't you?"

"How do I know? I don't want to. Do you know what village people say? They say that in the spinning room many things are spun besides yarn. They say, too, that the girl who laughs in the spring, weeps in the fall. But I jest and laugh. But my father says a peasant has no reason to laugh. I suppose he means because of the land-measuring."

"You mean the commensuration?"

"Something like that."

"What business is that of yours, Naja? That's an affair of men—not women.

"True. But I can talk of it with you, if I don't with others. I have heard—everyone says so in the village—that our *pope* has plotted with the *indznir*<sup>1</sup> to give the old graveyard to the rich estate owners—and to give the peasants a new one somewhere in the forest."

"Well! That does not concern you, does it?"

"Why doesn't it? My ancestors, my grandfather and my great grandfather are there. That graveyard has belonged to our race ever since we came from Bosnia, and now the land-owners want to

<sup>1</sup> *Indznir*—engineer.

drive their cattle over it and give us a graveyard in the forest where the wolves are, and the foxes."

I looked at her in astonishment. She had become pale and she looked at me with eyes that reminded me of the Montenegrin maiden in Čermak's painting of the "Death of the Voyevode."

My love affair with her was not really much more important than this. That is the reason I did not know what a deep place she had made in my heart. I did not find out until it was too late.

Before daybreak I left the house to go hunting. When I reached the village all was quiet. The road led past the farm of Nedeljković. In the plum garden by the brook, I saw Naja. She had just washed her face and was in the act of combing her hair. She looked enchantingly young and pretty. Her long black hair hung unbound, and through her little shirt which was open, I saw her breasts. At this sight I could not restrain myself, but rushed up to her, flung my arms about her and kissed her. With a loud cry she freed herself from my arms. At first she had not been angry because she thought it was just one of the peasant boys,



but when she turned and saw me, she was confused and tried to cover her breasts with her bare arms. Now I was sorry for what I had done.

“Dear, beautiful Naja!” I exclaimed.

“If I were dear to you, you wouldn’t have done that!” was the reply, moving away out of reach. I stood and stared at her not realizing that a peasant could have fine feelings. I had injured her. I had tried to play with her like a peasant boy.

She walked across the garden, sat down by a bed of pinks and wept. For shame I did not dare approach her. After a while she glanced over at the place where I was standing, and I thought her face brightened, that a little beam of joy stole out of her reddened eyes. In the meantime the sun had risen above the horizon, and a rosy brightness fluttered over the plum trees and the thin grass stalks. Upon a sudden the garden burst into a glory of rose color and white, and only across the distant valley still hung the violet tints of night. Everything else smiled under the light of the new day. Above me in a plum tree, a little bird sang as if its throat would burst. I breathed deeply, my soul expanded and I did

not try to know if the new light upon her face was merely that of the rising day. "Naja! Naja!" I exclaimed triumphantly, and started toward her. Just then some one called me. I heard loud, merry laughter. I turned and saw my friend Geza, the land-owner, behind me. He was a hunter, too, and fond of playing pranks. I was ashamed and wondered if he had heard my shout of triumph. I breathed easier when I learned from his conversation that he thought it was just an ordinary love affair. I went with him, and I did not dare look back toward Naja.

Later that day I did not meet her, nor the next nor the next. On the fourth day I was summoned to a distant place. There I remained four months and probably I should have stayed longer, had I not been summoned to the district court.

Twelve hours later I learned how important the affair was. In Naja's village the peasants had risen in revolt against the land allotment. The plowmen of the landed proprietors who tried to plow the fields which had belonged to the peasants were knocked down and beaten. The peasants took the village elders, the mayor and the *pope*, and shut them up in a guard house. Military aid

was summoned, and I was detailed to head it. Unfortunately I had the reputation of being an energetic man. I do not know that I was really energetic, but the fact remained that I had succeeded in putting down the most stubborn uprisings, not only among the peaceful, indolent Slavonian people, but among those Croats in whom there is some of the blood of the peasant, King Gubec, who led the peasant revolution of 1573. I had always considered it my first duty to serve the government. O, greatly regretted folly! Such follies clothe themselves in all sorts of high sounding names. But in the end, like truth, they must stand naked. I was fully under the sway of this belief then, and supposed I was reaching heights of power, when I showed no indulgence to the rebellious people.

This time I did not worry at all as to whether I should be able to put things in order. I considered the report exaggerated, and thought calmly of the day when, with a battalion of soldiers, I should enter the village. In addition I was thinking happily that I should see Naja again. I had forgotten all about the talk with her about the land allotment. I did not for a moment connect the

revolt in any way with Naja, although I was told that, during my absence, a peasant girl had come a number of times to inquire about me.

"Wasn't it Naja?" I asked.

"I don't know, but I tell you she was a beauty. You probably know well enough who she was, young man," declared my old landlady with a sly laugh.

"Shut up!" I replied. I wanted to shake off her inquisitiveness.

"Why did you not tell her where I was?"

"Why should I? You were too far away. And then I thought perhaps it would make you angry. God knows how peasant girls carry on these days."

"Don't talk such nonsense!" I interrupted. I hastened out to buy Naja a silk handkerchief and some fine knitting yarn. I was impatient to see her again. During the ride to the village I thought a good deal more about her than about putting down the revolt.

I found out, however, that reports of the revolt had not been exaggerated. I came, indeed, just in time to rescue the *pope* and the village elders. The guard-house had already been set

on fire at one corner. But we had a comparatively easy time in the village. In some of the open fields it was not much harder. The few peasants threw themselves flat upon the ground to prevent the plowing. They complained that the rich men had bought up the courts and the elders. But when the soldiers with bayonettes drew near, and pressed a few of them to the wall the crowd ran away. It was harder work in the forest and the pastures. Here weapons had to be used. But the great centre of opposition was the graveyard. There almost the entire village was assembled. Young and old men, women and children. They were each provided with some sort of weapon even if it were only a stick.

A few had guns, scythes and hoes. A ragged lubber pounded upon a drum as if he were "possessed." Before we reached there it was a sight to see; they were laughing, yodeling, cursing and cracking jokes.

They are noisy! A good sign. A barking dog does not bite. When we came in sight there was a silence. There was something awe inspiring in the gleam of bayonettes, something disagreeable, like the writhing of a serpent, and the ef-

fect was not lost upon the people. Fright disabled them for a moment. I made use of this opportunity to tell them to go back to their homes. But—either I spoke in a different manner than usual—or my voice did not have the usual firmness, the effect failed. A deafening cry followed my words.

“We will not yield! The *pope* and the elders sold us! They took the best fields themselves and then went over to the proprietors. What shall we do when they rob us of everything? And now the hungry wolves haven’t enough; they want to take away the graveyard where our fathers, and our fathers’ fathers have slept for ages—since we came from Herzgovina two hundred years ago.”

Then I recalled Naja’s words and trembled. I darted forward with no other object in view than to see if she was there. I took a breath of relief when I did not see her. What would she think of me if she saw me here? Would she not hate me. To the devil with the whole affair!

The anger of the peasants increased. The more I delayed the more angry they became. To an angry man or a wild animal one must never show lack of determination. It will be mistaken for

weakness. The peasants were making bold to attack the soldiers. The captain turned to me to give an order. At length the uproar increased until I did not know what to do. At length, with an effort, I made myself calm. I gave command to attack. The peasants received the soldiers with rocks and shots. Blood shedding could not be avoided. In spite of that knowledge I told the soldiers to fire into the air. The peasants guessed this and did not move.

"You don't dare to shoot. We belong to the emperor. The emperor is our father. He will not let you shoot down his people. Have no fear!"

That was my answer. The crowd began to hoot at the soldiers. A fight developed in which four soldiers and fifteen peasants fell. The crowd fled and we held the graveyard.

Suddenly upon a hilltop a woman appeared. She implored the crowd to turn back, not to fear nor to run away.

"Cowards! At a shot you run like rabbits. If there is a man here let him come to me! What do you think will become of you if you desert the graves of your fathers? Here! here! Now if you are such heroes fire at my breast!"

I recognized the voice of Naja, as she threw open the embroidered shirt, and uncovered a breast as white as the snow. It took me a few seconds to comprehend the sad situation. Blood pounded in my ears. My mind was dulled. A command of the captain aroused me. I saw him lying on the ground bleeding. Then I do not know exactly what happened, whether or not I gave an order—I only remember this picture—Naja, her white breast spotted with blood. Then I saw her fall.

What happened afterward I did not care. I ran to her. She knew me. She could not speak, but I threw myself down upon the grass beside her. I covered the wound with a cloth, then I bore her to the village, out of the noise. I had scarcely placed her on her bed when she died.

When I tore myself free a moment from the grief that overpowered me and got up, her wide, dead eyes were looking straight at me.

With her all my joy died, too. Could a man do worse than I did? And why was I her murderer? For the pleasure of them who are not well disposed toward the peasants. Remember: "The voice of the people is the voice of God!"



Pero had finished. We had reached his dwelling in the meantime. His thin features were white; upon them I read the greatness of his sorrow.

When two years later I read that he had been killed in the battle of Zajcar, I thanked God. But whenever I think of Naja, the peasant girl, hope brightens my heart. A nation that has daughters like her—such a nation need have no fear of the future.

## JAGICA

I HAD worked for a long time with the day laborers. As I started to go home night had already come. It was an inspiring warm night of summer; I chose the longest way, so enchanted was I with the beauty of the evening. In the moonlight the mountains seemed to tremble; from the trees slanted long, black shadows, and the scent of an unknown flower perfumed the air. The voices of nightingales resounded from trees within the forest, out of thickets along the hills, and from the deep grass, insects called.

On a night like this, the gentleness of slumbering nature, the sweet mystery of shadows, pour a warmth of happiness into the heart. A sort of divine unrest took possession of me. Every once in a while I paused and looked with delight upon the bright mist-veiled distance. Dreams of youth came back, long buried desires came to life again, and I longed passionately for something which I

was unable clearly to define for myself. The beauty of the summer night had intoxicated me. Across the deep, sweet silence rang out upon a sudden a song, sung by a voice of youth. At first the echo of the mountains brought the song to me, and I could not be sure whether it was a song or an interrupted voice that called. Then it drew nearer and nearer. There was no doubt now but that it was a song. Borne on the clean, soft air it reached me, and the melody was that of an old folk song. I wanted to hear it better, to be near it, and strangely moved, I followed the voice of song.

A tall, young peasant, barefooted, was hastening past. In one hand he held a twig which he moved nimbly to and fro. The round shabby hat rested on the back of his neck, and the night wind played with the hair upon his forehead. He bore his head erect, as if, with his song, he were striving to reach the limpid, air-swept heights.

Faster he walked. I followed him. His song lured me on. There was a longing in his onward leaps and in the words which celebrated love. When he was near the village he changed his song, and the new song was merry and mocking:

*"Shove the bolt, the door fling wide,  
Soon, sweetheart, I'm by your side."*

Out of the valley the echo came back, and in the echo there was something defiant, fawn-like.

Now the peasant boy left the highway and turned toward the hills. Above, between the fruit trees—one half of it pallid-white from the moonlight,—the other half black with shadows, peeped out a peasant's home. On the shadowed side, one tiny window shone fiery red from a lamp.

When the peasant reached the foot of the hill, the light was extinguished. A door within the house was heard to open, and a figure slipped across the moonlighted courtyard.

"Ah, ha!" I said to myself, not without envy. "I thought it must be a lover's rendezvous." In the meantime he had slowly climbed the hill. A woman's form came toward him a hundred steps away. From my place of concealment, behind the thick trunk of an old apple tree, I recognized in the girl—Jagica, the prettiest peasant girl in the country. A shiver touched me. "She!—And how prim she always appears," I added between my teeth.

The boy paused beside her but they did not shake hands, nor kiss, nor embrace. They stood and looked and greeted each other in the name of God and the Holy Virgin. He looked about for something to lean against, and seeing a tree stump, propped himself against it with the right half of his body.

"I walked too fast," he exclaimed, and drew one shirt sleeve across his face to wipe the sweat from his forehead. The girl drew a bottle from concealment, and held it out toward him. "Today father went to the wine-dresser's house and brought back a cask of wine. We drank some of it, too," she explained, turning aside a little. She stood resting her weight on one foot; with one hand she held a grass stalk, one end of which she was chewing.

The boy took the bottle and shook it softly. Then he lifted it to the light, nodded, rubbed the neck of the bottle energetically with one hand, coughed, spat, threw his head back and lifted the bottle slowly. For a long time one heard only the regular *gurgle—gurgle—gurgle*.

"I heard you a long way off. You came through the woods, didn't you?" began the girl, turning

toward him again, as the hand with the bottle fell slowly to his knee.

"I sang to pass away the time. I'm not so afraid either—in the night—when I sing. The witches don't dare come near then."

"I was really worried. I was afraid you'd gone too far toward Banovica. Old people say that once—there, a man was murdered. The witches choked him to death."

"Nothing like that will ever happen to me."

"Keep still! Keep still! Tell me the truth—didn't you go too near the horse herdsman? What if they had seen you? Heavens!"

"They didn't see me, and if they did—what do I care? I'm not doing anything wrong."

"But, God in Heaven, you know what sort of fellows they are. They are all mad because you come from another parish—to see me. They might do something to you and, as it falls out, tonight Mihalčič' Tono is with them—on the meadow. He's the devil."

"Ah—shut-up with that. Did you get through in the vineyard today?"

"Only a little hoeing left to do. Early tomorrow I go with my sister to finish the work."

"Is the hoeing heavy? The ground—is hard and lots of weeds? That's the way it is with us. Everyone is complaining. I worked hard today, too. Early I went to the mountains for the wooden pegs which were cut the week before last. Then I hoed some and later I went to the river for water. If it hadn't been for that I should have reached here earlier."

"I thought you were not coming any more. And then I thought again: it is far; it takes two hours at least. So I waited."

"What have you done?"

"I have spun. Mother and sister made fun of me. But—good—you see you *have* come."

"Did your mother know I was coming?"

"I told her."

"Your father, too?"

"No. Why should I? He would be mad. He says it is not right for you to come so often, because the *Zadruga*<sup>1</sup> had not been settled. Father says in your house they quarrel all the time, and he wouldn't like to have me go there."

"That's true. The devil knows what they mean. Ten times I have been to the city for the land set-

<sup>1</sup> *Zadruga*—measuring and division of land.

tlement. Since the *indznir*<sup>1</sup> measured it, not a thing has been done."

"Oh! I wish it was settled. Do you know my father is acting—*queer!* And every week old Mihalčič' comes and asks for me to marry his Tono."

"He better look out! I've served in the army and I know how to handle a gun. I'll kill anyone who tries to take me away from you. You are mine—and nobody else's."

"Be quiet, Janko! I don't like Tono. I'd rather jump into the water. I want only you. I won't break my word to you. But tell me, did they have a good time at the church festival at St. Peter's?"

"Fine it was, I say. I looked for you and the girls and you didn't come! I was mad about it although Toljagič Pavo treated one in great shape. Later—under the linden tree—Loncar's Katica tried to flirt with me. She teased me because I was sad. I yelled and turned loose at her, seized her round the waist, and danced around and around with her. I tell you they all laughed."

"Did you stay long?"

<sup>1</sup> *Indznir*—engineer.



"Yes, the "*hail Mary*" was over when I turned home. I wish you'd been there!"

"I couldn't go on account of my sister. She fell sick. They sent me to the meadow to gather rib-wart. We boiled it and in the late evening she was better. It was either the rib-wart or old Zefa who came to rub her."

"Yes—listen, Jagica! This fool of a Tono—he better look out for me. Does he think because he is better off than I—I don't dare to think. Don't you say a single word to him!"

"Ha, ha—ha! Must I quarrel with him?"

"Don't joke about such things! I will not and I will not— If he comes near you he'll lose his head."

"Have you drunk it all? Give me the bottle! How you talk about Tono! I've promised you. Look at the Reaper<sup>1</sup>—what a way it has travelled. You've got two hours' walk."

"I wish Jagica you knew how easy the walk is for me now. I'd walk five hours to see you." He grabbed her hand, then let it drop.

"God grant—and the Holy Mother of God—that we marry soon. Please—*please*—go quick to

<sup>1</sup> Reaper—the stars forming the constellation of the Great Bear.

the city and see about the land settlements. Tell the gentlemen that you want to marry. Fall is not far off."

"What do gentlemen care about peasant weddings! Well, I'll try anyway. Tomorrow early I'll go."

A cry rang over the meadow. In the quiet air of night it was something mighty, and three times, four times, the hill-tops answered back.

"The horse herdsman," said the girl trembling.

"Hide, Janko—quick! They are coming home. Day is near now."

He obeyed and they hid together in the bushes beside the apple tree. For a time they whispered. When the hoofs came nearer, they stopped. She gestured with one hand, for him not to stick his head out, but she followed the herdsman eagerly with her eyes. Loud laughter, merry jokes, and the tramp, tramp of horses' feet, as they swept past.

"Is Tono there?"

"Wait. *Pst!*—yes—I hear his voice."

"Is he looking this way?"

"Keep still! *A—h*—they are gone. Thank God! and now Janko, you must go!"

"Yes, I'll go! Goodbye. I'll come again."

They did not shake hands when they said goodbye. Jagica stood long where he left her and looked after him. He walked away with long, swinging strides. His shadow hopped along beside him. Soon the white moonlight and the mist blotted him out. Then his song rang clear—a song of youth and love. Astonished I said: was this a meeting of lovers? To me it was incomprehensible. With difficulty could I believe that such peasant hearts could love.

Soon I had an opportunity to be convinced. I heard about Janko's affair. The *Zadruga* was to be settled. To him fell the largest share of the land, but just on that account, no argument could be reached with the rest of the family. They knew how to impel the lawyers to some new subterfuge to hinder the allotment. Janko was all but crazy. He was especially upset because Jagica's father favored Tono, and reproached him with the delay of the allotment.

"Well, can't you rely upon the *Zadruga*?"

"No, it doesn't progress. They can't carry it through—always something is wrong, and the old

man won't give me the girl, until I am safely written down in the land-book."

"Are you really so much in love with her?" I ask.

"Of course, I love her. She is good. She can do all kinds of work."

"The affair can drag itself out even when the proclamation of the division has been made. After that comes the *appellation*. That can last months and months, and even when that is finished there can be another delay in handing over the land to you. Say that you will take less. Perhaps it will expedite matters."

The boy looked at me suspiciously. I knew how the peasants cling to every inch of ground.

"If you are so much in love with the girl—and if you know by taking less the settlement can be hastened—then do it."

The boy looked down upon the ground for a long time as if he were estimating every bit of dirt, and replied: "Very good! I'll do it then!"

That very day he went to the city.

But even now the affair was not hastened. Janko's house-companions tried to slip out of the agreement, and when the engineer made the divi-

sion they found a hundred mistakes. Poor Janko was miserable. He was in torture for fear he would lose Jagica, and on top of this the constant quarrels with the household and the delay over the division.

The autumn was drawing nearer and nearer. Jagica's father said frankly he would not forgive Janko for giving up so much land.

Tono was a regular visitor at the house. Jagica wept and begged Janko to hurry with the land. Almost every day he went to the city, where every day he heard the same thing: it was necessary—*first*—to do this, to do that.

There are only four weeks now to St. Catherine's day, which is the time when peasant weddings are celebrated, and he has heard nothing definite about the division. Then the report came to his ear that Tono and Jagica were to be married. And a proof of it seemed to be that he could not meet Jagica as of old. In vain, night after night, he stood by the apple tree and waited. He sang all his songs. With Tono he had frequently quarreled and come to blows. If they had not been forcibly separated, one or the other would have been killed.

"If I could only speak with her! I want to hear her say that she has been unfaithful to me. The gentlemen in the city are the cause of this. The last days he did not go near the house. Without sleep, he ran about the highways, across the meadows, into the city, without any plan. His clothes were torn, his hair disheveled and uncombed.

"I will murder him! I will murder him! Jagica is mine and nobody else's," he shrieked, running through forest and field, then breaking into sobs—or trilling shrilly one of his old songs.

On the evening before St. Catherine's Day—which was the wedding day, he disappeared. People said he had gone into the city. There was a sigh of relief, because they feared trouble on the wedding day.

The next morning the wedding procession started from Jagica's house. The bride was pale and her eyes showed she had been weeping. With difficulty she held erect upon her head the crown, trimmed with gold-paper flowers. She wrapped her wedding mantle about her as if she shivered. When the procession reached the highway, the musicians blew a ringing blast. Suddenly Janko

leaped upon them. He was ragged, barefooted, without coat or hat. In his hand he carried a club. He swung it toward Tono. But in the same moment he let it fall, burst into wild laughter and turned and ran away. Far, far-echoing among the hills they heard his laughter.

He was mad.

**JOACHIM FRIEDENTHAL**





## A POGROM IN POLAND <sup>1</sup>

**H**IGH and clear rang the cantor's voice. It was as if with musical fervor it tried to reach heaven itself, to plead that a door be opened and mercy granted, to plead that an ear be made sympathetic, to plead that the suffering in the heart of Jehova make it tremble with pity.

Never so splendidly before sang Reb Chajim's voice, sang the ancient melodies of the Day of Atonement. The voices of the men joined with it. With heaven-storming power they rose to heights of melody and then sank to depths again, as the pain of despair increased within them and opened up their measureless grief.

The men stood in their white grave-clothes as was proper. The silver embroidered prayer cloth they had thrown over their heads to cover themselves in the torturing hour in which, there above, the great judgment was made. Now would

<sup>1</sup> This is a story of the late war.

be decided whether they would be inscribed in the Book of Life, or cast into outer darkness. And in that outer darkness perhaps now armed Cossacks were standing and caring nothing at all about the Atonement and the Book of Life. Praying, the men stretched their arms above their heads, storming the footstool of Almighty God, wrestling for His grace, because once He had set them free.

And long centuries prayed with them. Long centuries which had weighed heavily upon the backs of these Polish Jews, and bent them; long centuries of want, disgrace, persecution—the persecution of the wanderer—and the curse. And the long centuries seemed to rise up again on these holy days, rise upon the bent backs, and stretch up toward the God of Righteousness, with the heaven-storming arms of prayer, and to ring out boldly in the voice of the cantor, to announce their woe.

The women, according to the old custom, sat apart, upon the horse-shoe curved balcony fronting the altar. Here the women wept softly. Sometimes a sob was heard and it cut tragically across the gentler melody of tears. And they wept long just as they do by the graves of their

dead. Each one had a grave within. Reflected grief from the melancholy of this hidden grave was visible in the wide, hopeless sorrow of the eyes. Even the eyes of the young women and girls were veils of grief. They all hummed together the ancient songs of Israel. Perhaps the meaning of the ancient words did not penetrate their minds at all and only the melody made them holy. Sometimes it was as if the antique words of Israel became life because their hearts hung upon them with such faith. But if a glance wandered away from the meditation it was sure to fall upon the stony face of Rivkele Kalischer. She had fled from Klodova to her mother. Rivkele Kalischer was not praying with the others, although her lips kept moving.

Her lips framed these words: "Hanged! Because they would not change a three ruble note!" Her glance was dull and dead. It pierced the light-filled Temple and saw the picture that was engraven upon her soul. It was Friday evening, three weeks ago. Two men swing in the wind like phantoms—from the balcony of her own house. And for four and twenty hours she, and all the rest of the Jews of the neighborhood, were forced to see,

because they were forbidden to close their doors or windows. There they had stood and looked upon the distorted features and the swinging dead men. And they were obliged to read, too, the piece of paper pinned upon them by the Cossacks: *"Hanged! Because they refused to change a three ruble note!"*

*Refused!* Had she not peacefully prepared the evening meal, said the prayer, lighted the candles, set out the Shabbes' bread, covered it with an embroidered cloth, while across in the Temple she listened to the singing: "We greet thee, Shabbes, beauteous bride!" Then the men came from the Temple. They stopped to talk a bit together. Her husband and brother-in-law were among them; she heard their voices beneath the door. Just then a troop of Cossacks rounded the corner. There were questions and curses. Her heart trembled. There were blows from whips. A kick threw the door open. A cruel voice called for a rope. She did not understand at first. What did they want with a rope? Then a kick sent her across the room. The Cossack struck her across the face with a knout. *"A rope! A rope!"*

And the Cossacks hanged them on the balcony. The Shabbes' candles were still burning and the bread was waiting for a blessing. The woman recognized in the dead men, her husband and her brother-in-law. And she read the words aloud: "Hanged!" Her face became like stone and she could not look away from the balcony where they were swinging; for four and twenty hours she could not look away.

Night came. The tall candles burned lower. The air was heavy with the breath of praying men. It came, the great hour of the falling of judgment. And there was not one among the men who was not wearing the sacred robe in which to appear before his God. Many an one seemed scarcely to be recognizable, his features had changed so under the reverence of prayer. And it really seemed as if in the hearts of these men who had been faithful in so many wanderings—even in the money lender—there was hidden a priest. But among none of them could be found the descendants of the Macabees who had arisen in wrath and slain their enemies. And no one breathed with the soul of Samson, whose mighty shoulders shook down the temple of the Philistines. Not one of

them prayed that one day he might be the master of those Russians who scorned him and persecuted him, who took away the power of his eyes and the freedom of his body, and make to fall and crash about their heads the mighty palaces of power, even if he himself perished with them. Every one prayed for his own life. And there was fanaticism in the prayer.

Now the mighty trumpets of judgment rang out just as they will on the day of the resurrection, and the people, standing, answered seven times just as in the hour of death. Seven times they uttered that word in which long centuries tremble, in which to-day resound the battles and the sorrows of the race of Israel, the word which plunged them from victory and triumph to disgrace and exile, the word which recurs again and again, increasing in resonance and power as if the voice of the world had uttered it:

*"Hear Israel!—the Eternal, the one God—the eternally One!"* And the shofar threw forth its fabulous tones just as on the Day of Judgment. It seemed to them all that the voice of God, just as when it had overthrown the walls of Jericho, had spoken; that it had pardoned their sins, and

promised redemption and grace. And the people in the Temple trembled. The clang of the shofar had not died away when the voice of a boy was heard: "The Cossacks! The Cossacks! They have surrounded the Temple!"

The boy's voice fell like a sword. The cantor stopped his sweetest singing. There was silence. Then a babel of frightened questions. Voice fell upon voice. Arms shook in wild excitement. A body fell. A woman's hand drew back the curtain of the balcony above. Someone shrieked: "We must hide." Plunged from ecstatic heights of meditation, faces distorted, they tried to bend down and hide.

The voice of old Rabbi Zaddik fell upon them like a restraining hand. He told them to be calm and pray on to their God who would not desert them. He would be the one the Cossacks sought. They were all in the hands of God.

Then a man spoke whom they adored like a saint, because he was filled with the wisdom of the Talmud; they revered him as a judge in Israel.

Already Reb Chajim, at a signal from the Rabbi, had cleared his throat, and taken up the singing where he broke off; already the replies of the con-



gregation were beginning, timid at first, when blows thundered on the door. It rang out like the thunder of Judgment Day. The words froze on their lips. Eyes swelled to bursting. But not a sound was heard. The men did not even turn their heads.

The door was thrown open and Cossacks rushed in. One went along the central aisle to the altar. He asked if that accursed traitor Rab——

“Hear Israel, the eternal, the one God, the eternally One!” Then a voice in deadly fear interrupted the leader before he could finish his question. It came from the back of the room and filled the Temple with woe such as was never heard before. Then all together the voices called: “*The eternally One.*” It was as if they were trying to throw up a wall of defense.

Angrily the leader commanded silence. And the wandering song stuck in their throats and trembled convulsively upon their lips.

The Rabbi spoke: “Sir, they are praying. Do you not see it? To-day is the holy day of the Jews.”

The officer replied that that was a matter of indifference to him. For traitors there was no holy

day. He, Rabbi Zaddik was accused of aiding the Austrian troops. He went to meet them fourteen days before their entry and had given them information. That was enough.

The Rabbi replied that he went to meet the German and Austrian armies, but he went with a Polish officer and certain citizens; they went to beg the soldiers to spare the people.

"It's a lie!" responded the leader. He likewise declared that there was a telephone concealed upon the altar which was to be a signal to the enemy. The Rabbi, and eleven others from the front seats—in order to make a round dozen—were to be hanged. "And the rest of you are to go at once into exile."

A wail of such wildness arises that it does not seem to come from a human throat.

At the command, the Cossacks jumped to the altar, seized the Rabbi, the cantor, and grabbed blindly for the others.

"Have pity!—Not me—not me! My husband is innocent. Jacob—" thus they screamed.

The leader counted: "One, two, three, four, five— Bring me a rope!" Then a voice yelled from the woman's balcony: "I'll bring the rope

—right away!” She swung her arms and beat her breast, and then leaped from the railing to the stone floor below. Still she gasped: “I’ll bring the rope right away!”

“Then merely the eleven,” said the leader sharply. “But quick—quick!” Upon the eight pillars the Cossacks quickly put up a scaffold.

While the women wept and cried for mercy, the men, dressed in their grave clothes, cowered in the corners and covered their heads in order to shut out the sight.

And now the congregation called aloud seven times—as in the hour of death—the ancient words of their faith: “Hear Israel! the Eternal, our God, the eternally One!”

That was their salvation, their consolation, their faith. And the shrieks of the dying deadened the voice of prayer—and the words of both were the same.

The murderers stamped upon the altar, broke the sacred shrines, threw the roll of the Torah upon the floor, and stole the gold and silver.

And still the Jews prayed on, the immortal death-prayer of their race for the eleven who were

hanged. Then the Cossacks' leader commanded silence; they should leave the city at once, because they had betrayed the city to the Germans. Upon the moment, just as they were, they should go, men, women, children, not one should be permitted to escape.

They begged to go home just for a moment. They had left babies in the cradle, they had left sick people. They had fasted since the day before; not a bit of bread had they swallowed, nor water. They begged to take a little food. Then the Cossacks laughed: "Search all you want to! Everything is burned! Everything is destroyed!" With their bayonets they drove them from the Temple. Outside they met other Jews in the same condition. About ten thousand men, women and children were driven from the city on the Day of Atonement.

For miles their cries extended. Groaning, the exiles were driven on through the night. To the Vistula they had been ordered, as they were driven through the gate—to the Vistula, on the left bank, but it would be better still if they jumped into the river.

A Rabbi from another Temple had saved the roll of the Torah; he headed the procession and carried it under his arm.

It was something ghostly to look upon, this white-clad procession of Jews in their death robes; it was like a procession of the century long sorrows of their race. About ten thousand living corpses wandered on through the night.

“Hear Israel! the Eternal, our God, the eternally One! *Hear Israel!*”

**KOLOMAN MIKSZÁTH**

KOLOMAN MIKSZÁTH (born in Sklebonya in 1849) is without doubt the best loved writer of Hungary. Why should he not be? He has something of the witty descriptive powers of Heine, the fluent unforced narrative of Dumas, and a peculiar charm which is all his own. He is a painter of inimitable miniatures, glowing with color, truthful in action, a veritable Meissonier of the pen.

In these, spiritedly drawn, richly peopled, diminutive little pictures we see all Hungary pass before us: the burger class, the petty nobility, the church, the state and the peasant. Sometimes these stories are ironic—because Mikszáth is numbered among the humorists—sometimes idyllic, sometimes realistic, and sometimes they are bitter and incisive, and strike home with a certain fatal touch of *intimité*, telling truths from which we can not get away. He has been a productive writer, and we do not need to go out of his native Hungary for a worthy parallel, when we pause to recall that Maurice Jokai wrote three hundred novels and tales.

Mikszáth is author of a novel, "Mácsik the Mighty," which reproduces the life of the petty nobility in upper Hungary. His short stories are collected into many volumes, such as "Club and Corridor," which stories were first published in the daily he himself edited, "Pesti Hirlap" (The Times of Budapest).

Other books are "Slovak Brothers," "Madame Paul Szontagh," "The City That Had No Men," "The Magic Caftan," "The Miraculous Umbrella."

We include two stories; one, from the writer's own experience in a small community where he was made judge at the age of twenty three; the other—"Fiddlers Three," from that remarkable book of fantastic and imaginative writing, which is strung together in a series of tales under the name of "The Deaf Blacksmith."

In 1887 he began to take an interest in politics and became a member of the Reichstag, where he threw his influence with the Liberal party.

This union of the poet and the wit, the romantic dreamer and the shrewd and bitter critic of life, is one of the gifts of Hungary and its neighboring peoples to the world of letters. It is seldom found in the Teuton or the Latin, even in a slight degree.

A volume of the short stories of Mikszáth was published in America some years ago. His first appearance in English was the short story, "The King's Clothes,"<sup>1</sup> which antedated the book.

<sup>1</sup> MIKSZÁTH (Koloman). "The King's Clothes." See Underwood, Edna Worthley. ("Famous Stories From Foreign Countries.")

## A TRIP TO THE OTHER WORLD

THE people of my country do not like to travel. The high, blue mountains that surround them, shut out the world. Besides, what could there be that is different on the other side of the mountains? And the rich people and the influential are of just the same opinion.

There is only one man in this part of the country—Franz Nagy—(and he lived a century or more ago!)—who has traveled. Once he went *almost* to Prague. After that all the people of his name went by the title of “the Prague Nagys.”

If there was one who had been *almost* to Prague, there were hundreds who had not been as far away as the next village, and among the latter is Paul Rediki. Once, because of an important law suit, upon the result of which all his property depended, he was called to Vienna. But he declared: “Rather would I lose all I have than travel to



Vienna." And he did just as he said and he became a sort of popular hero.

This affair in some way or other came to the knowledge of the Administration. Just what he did do or did not do I have forgotten, but the fact remains that King Ferdinand V invited him by letter to Vienna *ad audiendum verbum regium*.

When Paul Rediki received this invitation he seated himself at the table and penned a dignified refusal. He explained that he had just taken an oath never to go to Vienna, and he hoped that His Majesty would be gracious and pardon him, that he was very sorry that he could not possibly come. How very different was he from men of today.

However, it happened after many, many years that old Vienna bestirred herself and moved nearer. The wing-swift railroad had been built. Our great blue mountains were pierced through and through, and the velvet-soft, green meadows were covered with iron ribbons, upon which wheels were to roll.

Paul Rediki was in favor of the railroad, and worked lustily for it. "It will bring money and prosperity to our community," he declared, "and it will make our harvests of value."

Too bad that he was not at home when the first

flower-decked coaches rolled in; but he lay ill in an hospital where he had been sent by order of the doctor.

Upon the important day the entire country-side assembled. "We shall see now," argued the peasants "whether it is true or not." "It's all just foolish talk," declared Martin Saki, the cobbler of Tiszle. "Nothing will come of it. I'll bet you, brothers—it can't move ten paces."

"How could it go without horses?" questioned Mathias Kozka, laughing. Gabor Kovacz, who took care of the church, said he was willing to lie right down on the track in front of the engine, but the village watchman would not let him.

"Well, if it doesn't do any good, it won't do any harm!" he consoled himself by saying.

The railway officials were the butt of jests and scorn.

"Take a halter along any way, because you bet you'll have to pull that Polish village." The long coaches with their rows of little windows, fastened together in a long line, looked to them like a village of small and diminutive houses.

In the meantime the invited gentry had assembled. They climbed on to the coaches and the

huge, foolish machine began to puff and snort and blow like a wild horse, while the smoke poured forth and spread out across the pleasant fields. A whistle, and the long line of little Polish houses moved with a noise like thunder, and the more they moved, the faster, until it was just like an arrow shot from the bow.

Gabor Kovacz crossed himself piously again and again, and stuttered in confusion: "That's not the work of God, men! The devil is behind it."

"Let the fool think so," contradicted Istvan Tot.

"I tell you that there are horses inside of it."

"But where? We ought to see them."

"I'll bet my soul they are hidden there! Probably in every second little house, there are two parade horses from the circus, and they pull along the houses which are behind them."

That was the most reasonable explanation, and found ready belief. Only the most zealous and religious kept insisting that it was tempting God's mercy, and it was the work of the devil.

These seemed to have hit upon the truth; because when the train came back from its trial trip at noon, the heavens began to bear witness to the anger of God.

At the great banquet just as all were lifting their wine glasses to drink the health of the absent Paul Rediki, and the voices rang out: "Here's to—!" a telegram came saying that Paul Rediki was dead. He died at exactly nine o'clock, the very moment when the train entered his village. So his soul went journeying away with it.

Outside a storm began to rage. It uprooted trees, unroofed houses, the lightning struck apart, like a sword of God, the great bell in the tower and destroyed one of the small station houses. The reapers of Paul Rediki saw bloody rain drops falling upon the grass. That's what always happens when man tempts the mercy of God.

On the third day at three o'clock the burial was to take place. At half past two the coffin was to come on the train, and the services were to be conducted with pomp such as had never been seen before in Gernyefalva. Printed invitations had been sent to the gentry of the neighborhood. Nine reverend gentlemen of neighboring villages were there. The country roads as far as one could see were black with crawling wagons. Even the pupils from the Selmezlanya had been invited and were approaching in numbers.

The dead man deserved this honor because he was a reliable man, a man who kept his word even unto death. But they were obliged to get along with only the little bell because the big bell had been ruined in the thunder shower.

There were numberless mourners dressed in black. The black, draped catafalk was placed under the linden tree; here seats were brought out, the tapers lighted, the singer cleared his throat, and the mourners took their places.

Now nothing was lacking but the dead man. The master of ceremonies, clothed in full dignity, looked impatiently at his watch. "He must be here very soon."

Carl Petroczig, who had arranged everything properly for the ceremony, hastened to quiet him.

"He must be here soon. The wagon has already been sent on to the station." After a brief period of waiting, rattle of wheels was heard, the crowd began to sway to and fro, each one stretched up and tried to look over the one in front. While curiosity whispered, there were heard cries of astonishment and displeasure, and the members of the family began to separate.

"What is the matter? What has happened?"

inquired the people, and stepped about lively upon each other's corns, in their effort to reach the catafalk where the relatives were assembled.

Petroczig, as paralyzed as if he had been turned suddenly into a statue, gave the explanation, in a tone that resembled despair.

"My brother-in-law has not come: he has been delayed."

It was really true; the dead man had delayed his own funeral. They sought him on the train, but he was nowhere to be found, although a telegram had come which said that he had been sent on it. There was nothing for it now but for the assembly of mourners to depart, and to beg the pardon of the others, that they had come in vain.

"How people do change when they are dead!" observed the reverend Pastor Mukuczek, angrily. "The blessed man was always so punctual, too, when he was alive."

The crowd dispersed, while the family hastened to demand again the body by telegram. But it did not come the next day, nor the third, nor the fourth. They could not get any trace of it.

At length after elapse of a week they found it in Vienna. So Fate willed it that he should visit

the city, which he declared he would not enter for any price.

The wagon with the body, by some accident, was driven to the station for Vienna, and placed in a car attached to that train. So poor Paul Rediki, after his death, traveled the length and breadth of Austria for an entire week.

That is the reason that I insist that it is better to die at home, but it is a good deal better still, not to die at all.

### FIDDLERS THREE

**T**HREE Bohemian fiddlers were traveling through the country; fat Zahrada, goat-bearded Safranyik, and tall Zajczek. They had a quite remarkable adventure.

One fine summer evening the three tramp fiddlers came from Altsol over here, and while they were trudging along through the Lopata Forest toward the valley, a thick fog overtook them, and it became dark as night, so they were unable to follow the highway.

They thought they could not be far away from Crizsnócz, perhaps the distance of two gunshots, but they could not be sure of that course, for no light was to be seen through the darkness. On the side of the way where we now are, trees, barns, and storehouses shut out view of the dwelling houses of Crizsnócz, and not one of them had ever been in this locality before.



"I'm as hungry as a dog, friends. We must reach the village soon—and yet, of course, I can't tell. It may be a long time. I think we better unhitch the horses here where we are and rest a bit."

Safranyik shared this opinion: "Right. To-day the Smith won't be hammering." Safranyik meant by this the moon, in which there is a picture of a smith hammering at his forge.

They agreed and stopped their journey. The poor devils were trudging along perhaps the very piece of road where we now are. They unhitched their horses, which means in their speech, that they pulled off their boots. Each arranged his pack for a pillow, placed the fiddle beside him, and then stretched out upon the ground, where the second crop of hay had just been cut. No king goes to sleep in a more fragrant chamber than they.

Scarcely had they closed their eyes, or perhaps they had not closed them yet at all, because if they had they couldn't have seen, when they observed—at just a short distance from them—a long row of lighted windows.

Safranyik was the first to take notice of this: "Quick—Zahrada, Zajczek! There's a lighted

castle right under our nose. Up—Zahrada! Up Zajczek! I feel an itch that tells me we'll get good food and drink there."

They were all three hungry. It is not necessary to make any remark about their being thirsty. They jumped up, picked up the fiddles, and set out for the castle.

It was a large and splendid castle. Across the façade were thirteen lighted windows, and they glowed mightily through the night. And within—what life—what revelry! Twenty cooks were running hither and thither in the great kitchen. Some were turning huge spits and seasoning sauces; another was cooking fritters; the third peeling potatoes. One was grinding poppies in a mortar, another drawing foaming beer whose fragrance all but made the fiddlers dumb. The scent of the mown aftermath upon which they fell asleep was sweet in the fields, but this fragrance of a foaming brew was quite different.

And within the great drawing rooms! Men and women of nobility, in festal attire were sitting in front of the roasted meats and red gleaming wines. They heard the drinking glasses ring at touch, laughter and repartee echoed from the resplendent

walls of marble which were lovelier than those of Count Waldstein in Golden Prague.

What joy, what surprise and animation, when the guests looked up and saw the three fiddlers. A pock-marked, red haired man in a long dolman fastened with huge silver buttons jumped up, making the spurs upon his boots to ring. He drank gayly to their health, swinging his glass toward them.

"Hello—fellows! Just in the nick of time. Out with your fiddles!"

They did not wait to be asked the second time. And from the old strings, they lured all the enchanting melodies of Hungary, which they had learned upon its lonely highways. Young men jumped up from the banquet, and stately matrons, and charming maids, bearded old men, and stripling youths who were not bearded, began to dance and beat time, so that it was something amazing to see. The heels of their new boots rattled; trained, silken gowns twisted and hissed like serpents, and the marble floor groaned with dancing feet.

A little round, red-cheeked woman of some thirty years, who wore a lofty, powdered, 18th century coiffure, covered with a coquettish, jeweled

butterfly cap, and a gown of sky blue satin, danced up to Zahrada. She placed one tiny hand upon her hip, with the other waved her handkerchief of lace, fluttering it languidly beside her ear, and then danced the Czarda with fire and passion. She stamped and stamped with fury, with her little feet and called to him:

*"Yuchkay—Yuchkay—for never die will we!"*

Sometimes in her uncontrolled emotion she pulled some stately nobleman from his chair, and made him dance a measure with her, in a manner that was good to see. Look now! Look! the fat, ivory bald priest she is pulling away from the wine!

"Come, come, my reverend father! Your feet are rested. You can dance."

The reverend father leaped to the floor, but he was obliged to confess that he knew only the grotesque Slav dance—*Podza bucski!* Now it chanced that Zajczek was a master of this. Then the fiddles sang shrill their Slovak song, and the reverend gentleman leaped about with zeal in this most foolish dance, leaped and swung his legs till the great gold chain about his neck jingled and jingled—

"A fine fellow—the priest," whirled the whisper

about. "How did he ever conceal all this fun that's in him!"

To the song of the fiddlers the guests from all the other rooms came running in, and the dancing crowd grew larger and larger—and always the merriment rose higher. Two from another room, one in a light dolman the other in an elegant laced coat of fur—and in this heat—(and they were old, too, over seventy) joined the young dancers and laughed and leaped and rattled their silver spurs.

One pretty girl (she was blond and she wore a crown of fresh flowers on her hair, and huge golden earrings in ears that were very white) lost the lap-pet from her shoe.

"Who made these shoes?"

"Prakovsky."

"Where is Prakovsky? Wait you bungler! Bring Prakovsky here. He shall be covered with plaster."

Ten people started to bring Prakovsky. They said that he was playing *durak* in the third drawing room, with Father Krudz and a lawyer.

In the meantime they kept right on brewing and cooking in the kitchen. Prettily dressed, flirta-

tious peasant girls in high Spanish leather boots and gay kerchiefs, brought in platters and drinks. By the banquet table, which extended from one end of the long room to the other, beside which the three fiddlers were playing—the feasting guests drifted to and fro, and every once in a while resounded the words of an eloquent toast. Of this toast, the fat Zahrada—who had learned to speak a little while tramping over Hungary—understood a few words.

Now a pale, thin young man, who had a large wart between his eyes, got up, lifted his glass and drank a toast to the distinguished, nobly born Martin Folkinházy, and praised all his children and his children's children. Zahrada meditated:

“That man with the big wart must be an ass. It's only safe to praise one's ancestors—they are the only ones one can be proud of in Hungary.”

Now he began to praise their great, great grand children, closing with the brilliant prophecy:

“I hope the Almighty will be good enough to let them die sooner or later.”

The man at end of the table, deeply affected, nodded his head, and the whole company touched glasses, whereupon he jumped to his feet and bowed

and offered his arm to an old lady, who wore white powdered hair, a violet silk dress, led her to Safranyik, and bent and whispered something in his ear. Safranyik declared that they both smelled of the grave. Hereupon Safranyik signalled his two companions, and they began to play a minuet of long ago.

The two ancient figures began to hop about, then to walk with dignity, to bow and make regal reverences, and to dream lovingly of the past. That was something ridiculous, and at the same time elegant and distinguished. Long ostrich feathers trembled and coquetted upon the lofty headdress of the old woman, while the old man carried his hat under his arm, and his thin, wiry little body, bent and waved with the lightness and grace of a sparrow that poises itself for flight. Once, the old, old lady dropped her golden, glittering fan. Zahrada jumped and picked it up and tried to offer it to her, but just then the old lady made a courtly gesture with her hand and chirruped like a little bird (she did not have a single tooth in her mouth!): "Be so kind, sir, as to keep it a little while."

Then they floated on again in the gayety of

the dance—God knows—alone—where. Zahrada kept the fan, but no one came to fetch it. The young woman who wore the butterfly cap was so overcome by the fiery dance, that she took off the jeweled cap and put it on the head of tall Zajczek. But his head was so little, that it hung as if on a broom stick. Naturally everyone began to laugh—and the orgy grew wilder and more unrestrained.

For a moment the dancing was interrupted. A fat old man whose coat was fastened with garnet buttons, exclaimed: "*What manners*—the fiddlers three have not been asked to eat or drink!" Then began such running this way and that. The peasant girls in the red morocco shoes brought in a little table, and loaded it with food. Potted hare, roast sucking pig, cakes, tarts, pastries of Crizsnócz, and brandy from Rigy.

The three Bohemians hung their fiddles on the wall, sat up and began the feast— How good it tasted! If it only did not have such a scent of the dead about it! It must have been very late. The candles were all but burned down, and the pale wind of dawn made them flutter and tremble like ghosts. The noblemen and women were still talking and laughing in the glowing marble rooms.



One little man of smoothly shaven face, who wore glasses, took out his snuff box, and circled the resplendent room, offering a pinch to everyone, and saying in the most sympathetic voice: "How do you feel tonight?"

"Good, Doctor! Most excellently, Doctor!"

The little man with the glasses rubbed his hands:

"We have you to thank that we are *here*—" and then he began to beat his breast.

It was all so enchanting to look upon, so merry—Zahrada could not look enough to satisfy himself—at the slender little lady. He poked Safranyik in the ribs with his elbow: "Which one of all these would you choose?"

Safranyik pointed to a mischievous, laughing brunette who stood beside a mirror. The teasing beauty understood the lustful glances of Safranyik, perhaps she heard what he said, and she twinkled her eyes at him, so that he trembled just as if he had the fever. Bold Zajczek had a still more remarkable experience with one of the peasant girls. He tried to pinch her, but something hurt him so that he shrieked and began to drink to calm himself. Zahrada drank, too. But Safranyik drank more

than anyone else, and all the time he held on tightly to the golden, jeweled fan that belonged to the little old lady. (The old lady might, of course, ask for it at any time!) The fiddlers three at length began to be sleepy—Now dimly, as if only with one ear—did they listen to the wild revelry in the marble halls, and at length sleep fell upon them, and so heavily, that as far as they were concerned, the world could come to an end.

When at length they awoke and rubbed their eyes it was morning. The golden disk of the sun was just lifting itself above the bare summit of Mount Málnád.

They look about upon their surroundings. They were in the old forgotten graveyard of Crizsnócz, and the three fiddles were hanging upon the grave stones. Beside Safranyik's head, lay a human skull, instead of the jeweled butterfly cap which the merry little gentlewoman had pulled over his head. Zahrada held in one hand the bone of an arm.

Terrified, their teeth chattering, they got to their feet and ran to the village, where they related their adventure of the night. In the relation, the vil-

lage dwellers recognized their long buried ancestors. Even the descriptions of the clothes in which they had been buried were correct.

This caused great excitement and incredulity, but just on that account it was believed (because three such honorable people related it)! And the three fiddlers were wined and dined, and for the entire winter they remained in Criznócz, and went from banquet to banquet, telling the people of the gay life of their buried fathers.

And each time they told the story, it had increased in size and become more important. Sometimes Zahrada, sometimes Safranyik, thought of something new which they tacked on to it, something which it was necessary that the living nobility learn about their ancestors, and the feasts in their honor grew more elaborate and costly.

At last the affair reached the ears of the honorable Samuel Szirotka, an ancestor of our present pastor, and he summoned the people together and sharply told them what is what.

"Blessed brothers in Christ! In this community I, alone, am paid to talk to you about what happens on the other side of the grave. And I say to the others who are taking my duty upon their

shoulders to go to the devil and get out—if they do not they will be sorry.”

And thus the three fiddlers were driven away—but the story still remains—and the strange thing about it is that it keeps growing and growing.



**WALTHER NETTO**



## THE SWINE HERD

### A TALE OF THE BALKAN MOUNTAINS<sup>1</sup>

**A**PPROACH of evening in a land of black mountains. Fine, cold rain like a winding sheet. A highway crawling along the narrow valley, about half way up the height, like a man bent over a stone, or a goat; from afar it looks like a woolen thread stretched across a cliff.

The wet rocks shone like black coals, or metal mirrors. Now and then a ray of light from the west slipped across the barren waste.

It was cold. What difference did it make if it was? In the cell of a cloister I knew there was a hearth kept warm for me; I was hastening toward the warmth, toward people—even if they were silent people—toward the smoke of homes and the cheerful light.

<sup>1</sup> The writer of this story followed in the wake of the armies and wrote of the country he saw. This story was first published about three years ago.



Beside me holding the reins sat the owner of the cart; huge, raw-boned, grey, crabbed. Behind his brow colossal thoughts were crowding. We were driving at top speed. Silence had reigned between us for some time.

He had offered me a seat beside him with a gesture of the hand which said: "Perhaps it will give you pleasure to drive through a couple of villages with me. You know, of course—" They all have the manners of dethroned princes. He had used his whip with the *grandezza* of a capitalist upon the Corso in Buda.

Still it rains. It is cold.

I wrap myself closer in my sheepskin. For hours we have not exchanged a word. Why should we?

Then the highway makes a sharp curve—and—suddenly, the horse jumps to one side, curves back and neck, stiffens his front legs, while myriads of stars shoot from his iron shoes—and stops. We are all but thrown out. What is the trouble? Now imagine—I lift my head and try to see—what a strange thing is life—I see—a long road black with hogs. Fifty, a hundred, a thousand,

ten thousand—even this gives you no conception of the number. Thousands of hogs crowding around a swine herd.

And the swine herd sits upon a milestone. He holds a one-string violin upon his knee, from which from time to time he draws two notes, one high and one low, as accompaniment to a song. With the dignity of a royal bard, with the calmness of a ruling prince, he addressed his people—his herd of hogs. Thus Homer spake; thus Ossian sang.

Ah!—

“Stop a bit, Prince,” I begged, addressing the driver of the cart.

“Stop a bit—”

“*Eh bien!* There’s time enough.”

“What are days anyway? What are weeks? Time is merely a stop-watch for people who calculate in an office.”

And the man sitting upon the milestone was saying: Beloved swine, my brethren—Pan Strahinja’s life has now reached its zenith, just as a wanderer reaches the summit of the mountains, or the sun the zenith of the heaven, and the mid-day had bleached his head. But do not think for

a moment that the fire within his falcon eyes had lessened. They were still glowing coals, they were the gleaming heads of bunched swords, and they sparkled like the great gem on the middle finger of his long white hand. You remember it, my swine.

It was on a night in the sixth decade of his life. A sultry night, a scent-heavy night of high summer. Pan Strahinja lay upon his couch, in a tent richly hung with rugs and embroideries, whose gold-threaded walls gleamed in the reflection of a swinging lamp of bronze. He had just put aside his weapons, his robe of state, and slept—exhausted—after the princely meal he had just given in honor of a Turk.

Do not believe, my dear swine, that the great Pan Strahinja had sought out a Turk for a friend, or— No! You must understand—*eh, my swine?*—that great people have obligations. The Turk had just been his guest. But I suppose you do not understand that, do you? Anyway it doesn't make any difference.

Well, as I said before, Pan Strahinja lay upon his couch and slept. And beside him lay a woman. She lay there naked, playing with her long, un-

bound, golden hair—holding it up and looking through it at the swinging lamp of bronze.

On a chain of pallid silver about her neck she wore a great shining gem which was the color of the sea. The stone lay between her breasts, just as if one had dipped up ocean water in one's hollow hand and let it drip down there, and as if she dare not move lest it should slip away.

Now she folded her arms under her head in order to lift herself up a little, and she looked from time to time toward the door of the tent, and then toward Pan Strahinja, who slept beside her. And now see what happens, my swine! Pan Strahinja slept there, and so might he have kept on sleeping for hours. All of a sudden a great thought slipped across his sleeping brain, and in order properly to consider the thought, he opened his eyes. Pan Strahinja opened his eyes, and as he slowly turned them upon the rich walls of his tent, with a superb indifference—he finds— What in the name of the three devils is it that he finds? He finds the place beside him empty. Now what do you say to that, my swine? The woman was gone. There was no use of thinking about it more; the woman was gone.

For an instant Pan Strahinja draws his hands across his brow; for an instant he meditates. The dinner he gave had indeed been a wild orgy. The devil take dinners like that! Again he looks at the place beside him; it looks just the same. The woman was gone.

And Pan Strahinja—listen, my swine—the great Pan Strahinja roared. He roared like a bull. He roared until the swinging lamp of bronze began to tremble. He roared until his sword shook in its scabbard; roared until the guard awakened from their napping, and seized their spears; until the horses in the stalls began to whinny— The woman had been stolen. A moment of meditation.

There was no room for doubt. It was self evident. It was clear as daylight. It was the Turk who had stolen her. He had shown her to him in the evening just as he had shown him his horses, his weapons, and his dogs. Of course it was the Turk! The Turk—that little crooked legged, insignificant, dirty Turk! She was with the Turk! And Pan Strahinja—the great Pan Strahinja began to laugh like the spirits of a thousand mad men.

His men ran to the door of his tent.

“What is the matter, master?”

"Nothing. I was dreaming—*ha, ha, ha*—I just dreamed that you brought me the crown of the Serbs—you dogs. Didn't you? Well—very good. Now go—go."

Hardly are they out of sight when he whistles for his black slave. A few moments later a stallion stands saddled in front of the tent. He puts on his sword; it leaps from the belt toward him like a woman. And then comes his greyhound—Karaman—and leaps toward him. He swings into his gold-worked saddle, and away he rides, out upon the heights, in the sweet, star-clear night.

What a picture, my swine, what a picture! And what a thought! Pan Strahinja under the light of the moon, riding upon a stallion from whose mouth the white foam falls and clings in flecks to breast and shoulder—Pan Strahinja, riding away in the night after the pale, blond slave-child.

She had soft, strange movements she had learned from the animals of the wild. She had slender, graceful limbs and cool, sweet skin; skin cold to the touch like the skin of an Indian serpent—like the chill of the interior of sunless temples.

Ahead already stands the tent of the Turk. In a moment he has crossed the enclosure and his

stallion waits by the door. Slowly he has slipped from the saddle.

He pushes the curtain back, and not like a stranger—calmly—as if he himself were master there. And then he looks upon the Turk—and the woman. All he can see of her is her long gold hair, falling from a divan to the floor. The rugs upon the floor of the tent are thick and soft. They do not hear him. Is it laughter that is shining in his eyes? Is it anger? No. It is merely the cool observation of the judge who weighs the battle.

“There is something beautiful—noble—about love,” Pan Strahinja was thinking. “I will have a picture of this scene made for myself sometime—in gold.”

Then Pan Strahinja lifted up his voice. He spoke just as if he were talking about the weather.

“Listen, my friend.”

“The devil!” shrieks the Turk.

“Listen, my friend. I might have killed you just now. But if I had your blood would have flowed down over this little serpent. The thought of that displeases me.”

That was well said, my swine. Don’t you think

so? That's the way distinguished people talk. What could the Turk say to that? Not a thing! So they were the only words spoken.

Now it was plain that the Turk must gird on his sword, then Pan Strahinja and the Turk walked out of the tent, out upon the hills, under the star-clear sky.

It was a procession worthy to look upon. Ahead walked Pan Strahinja and the Turk, side by side, just like friends. Next, with long, swinging strides came the stallion; behind the stallion the blond woman, hastily wrapped in a mantle of purple silk, and around them played the white greyhound with its giant leaps.

Do you suppose—you swine—that they went at each other like peasants? Is that what you think? Listen! They spoke as if races listened—nations—as if great armies stood behind them.

Thus spake Pan Strahinja, the naked sword in his left hand, while with his right hand he accompanied his princely words which were something like this:

“I am Pan Strahinja, the son of the great Pan Soundso, and the grandson of the exalted Pan Soundso, who lost his life in the glorious battle by



the White Water. You know about that— And I took to me a woman for the pleasure of my nights. There she stands—a woman with the graceful body of the roebuck—and the nature of a serpent. What difference does it make? The Patriarch of Stamboul himself gave her to me—his friend—to me, the great Pan Strahinja. And one night a Turk came, and—”

This was the way he spoke.

Then the Turk began: And—that, we will leave to him—he spoke after the manner of heroes. You should have heard it, my swine, for I assure you it was not bad.

And now the fight began.

What a picture! Strength against cunning; the splendor of the lion against the cunning of the serpent. What a fight! The air trembled when the great swords swept through it. But neither hesitated. The fight became crueler and wilder. The Turk disables Pan Strahinja's leg. Then the greyhound leaped to his throat. Pan Strahinja whistled him aside. The woman seized the mantle of Pan Strahinja, but the stallion struck at her with his hoofs. Ravens circled over their heads like black ships of a giant fleet. At length they roll

down the hill together. There they lie. The eyes of the woman who stands gazing down upon them—the indifferent eyes—grow larger, grow rounder, with horror. The greyhound stands beside her ready for the plunge, like a trained leopard of the chase, and the stallion has the fire of battle in its blood.

The light of coming day can not penetrate the rocky cavern where they have rolled together, and where the great Pan Strahinja, with a hand of steel, is slowly choking the Turk to death. Ha!—my swine! He killed him with his own hand.

Then he freed himself, drew his golden dagger, and cut off the head and walked quickly, carrying it, to the high land.

He fastens the head to the saddle, lifts the woman up, swings himself to place and rides calmly away toward his tent.

A few months later the Patriarch of Stamboul visited the great Pan Strahinja, when he was setting out on his journey to Rome.

He saw hanging in the corner of his tent a skull.

“Whose is that?”

“A Turk.”

“How does he earn such honor?”

"Do you remember the woman whom you gave me for the pleasure of my nights? He wanted her."

"And you—did you kill her?"

"Friend," replied Pan Strahinja, "suppose someone stole your great ruby, and you found both the thief and the ruby, what would you do with the thief?"

"I would kill him."

"And then would you throw the ruby away?"

"I'd be damned if I would!"

"—therefore—I—"

THE END









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